



# THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Dry and bright

(IR65P) 60p

## THE EYE

The definitive guide to the arts - and Eddie Izzard



## THE LONG WEEKEND

Uncorking fun with Santa, guys and dolls



## THE MAGAZINE

Going crackers, giving the gingerbread



# Major's message of doom for EU

Anthony Bevins and Sarah Helm

The European Union faced political break-up and economic disaster if it took the wrong decisions on integration and the single currency, John Major said last night. The implicit threat was that a Conservative government could leave the EU if it decided to go down the wrong road.

His threats were delivered at the Dublin summit after President Jacques Chirac of France suggested his colleagues should throw away their "prepared briefs" on the future direction of the union. Mr Major said he had been presented with two false choices: a choice between a political union and a free-trade area. Britain wanted neither.

The Prime Minister said that unless proper flexibility was provided for development of the union, with groups of countries being allowed to go their own way on different issues, it would face grave problems. Countries like Britain would not be forced into unattractive and unappealing action. And if the wrong decisions were taken, "it would blow the European Union wide apart".

Some of the suggestions on the table were not acceptable. An unemployment chapter was "unattractive" and would not create a single job. He would not accept the argument that the union would grind to a halt if enlarged without an extension of qualified majority voting.

As for the single currency, Mr Major said it would be the "most far-reaching decision", which would "dwarf" earlier ones. But he added: "Insisting on a particular timetable is not sensible and can end in disaster". That disaster would follow countries going into a single currency without being ready - "when the only safety-valve will be higher unemployment".

The summit took two further significant steps: when specimen samples of the euro note were issued - with blank spaces for national symbols like the Queen's head - and heads of government agreed the disciplinary terms that will be used to back the single currency.

Then Wajet, the German Finance Minister, said of the code, which will bring in fines for recalcitrant single-currency members: "This means that the Euro will be a strong currency."

In spite of advances made on the single currency, the Irish Foreign Minister, Dick Spring, said the election of the Labour leader, Tony Blair, as prime minister would provide Europe with a positive new contribution from Britain. That rare and diplomatically embarrassing intervention in domestic British politics by the EU's Irish Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, the opportunity to reply that Europe was indeed waiting for Mr Blair - because he was "naive", "inexperienced", and "silly". He was a soft option who would surrender so much that Mr Major had so securely defeated.

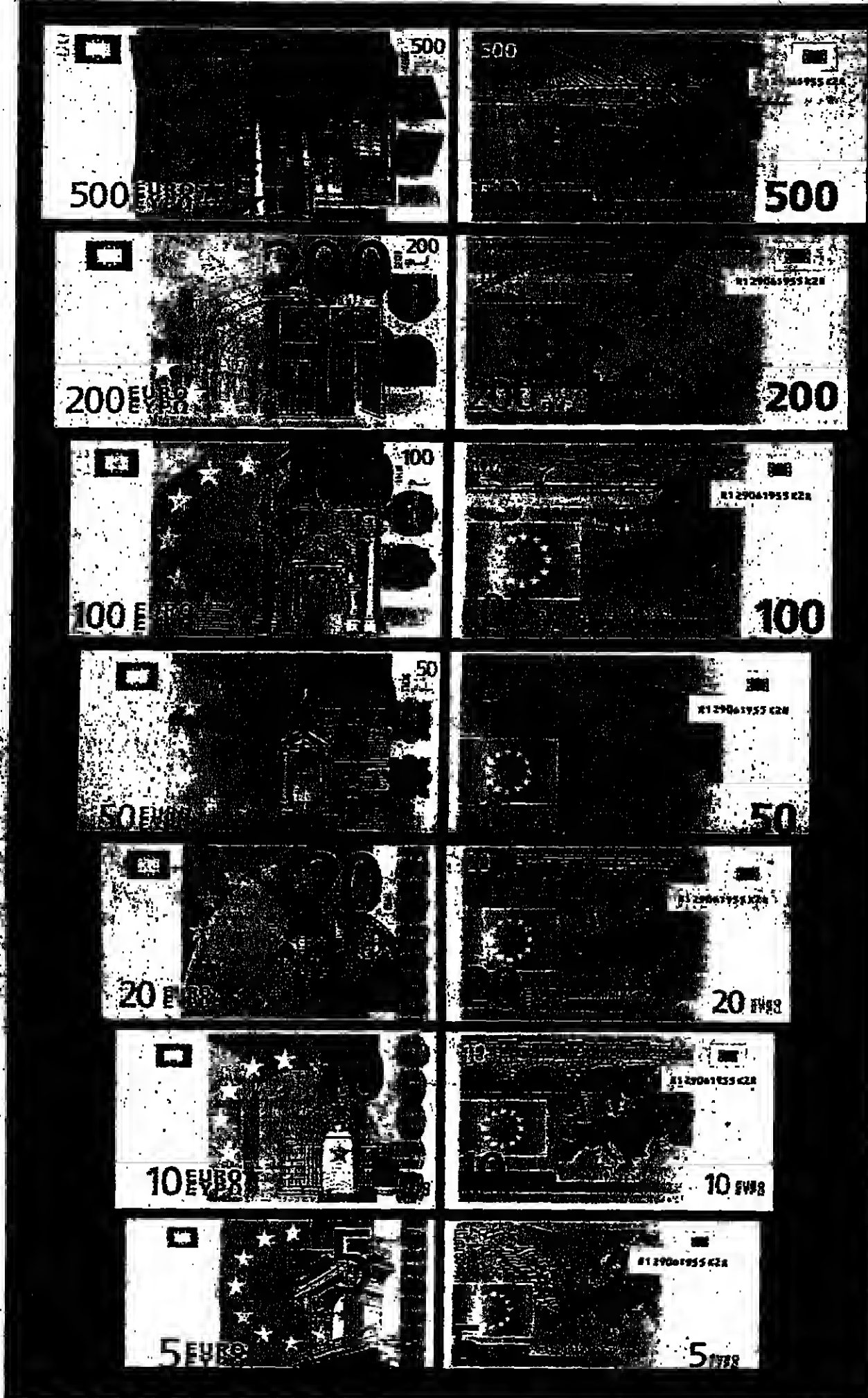
But Mr Rifkind conceded that if the Conservative Party did not hold out its differences, it would lose the election. He added later that a Labour win was possible.

Mr Spring told BBC Radio: "We want to see a British government that wants to make a positive contribution to the development of the European Union. Certainly, Mr Blair is expressing a confidence, and the Labour Party is very united in relation to positions on the European Union. Regrettably, the Conservative Party is very divided. It does put them in a very invidious position. I can say this as leader of a party which had problems with Europe back in the 1980s - the Irish Labour Party. You're obviously in a far more difficult position if you are worried about anything you may say, or any initiatives you may take, if there is a large segment within your party that has problems with it. And that is the existing situation within the Conservative Party."

Security forces are on alert throughout the United Kingdom amid fears of a new IRA bombing campaign. "There has been greater vigilance at key sites such as the City and the Canary Wharf complex in London and military installations across the country. Senior politicians in Northern Ireland and at Westminster have been warned they could be assassination targets."

And in recent weeks security has also been increased at potential targets in Northern Ireland, including at Aldergrove Airport, near Belfast. The threat was underlined when the IRA tried but failed on Wednesday to blow up a security forces vehicle in Belfast with a Semtex-filled mortar.

This week, in the run-up to Christmas, the head of Scotland Yard's Anti-Terrorist Branch, Commander John Grieve, warned of these "dangerous months" and urged people to be on their guard. "Unfortunately it is a reality of life that we need to be continually aware of the threat of terrorism, particularly from the Provisional IRA," he said.



Banking on change: The euro notes unveiled yesterday, from the 500 down to the 5

Photograph: PA

## UK braced for IRA attack

Colin Brown, Michael Streeter and David McKitterick

Security forces are on alert throughout the United Kingdom amid fears of a new IRA bombing campaign. "There has been greater vigilance at key sites such as the City and the Canary Wharf complex in London and military installations across the country. Senior politicians in Northern Ireland and at Westminster have been warned they could be assassination targets."

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The Labour leader stuck to his approach of keeping his party's approach closely aligned to the Government on questions such as the possibility of a new IRA ceasefire and of Sinn Féin's entry into talks.

He visited the constituencies of the three main parties, meeting the Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble, Seamus Mallon of the SDLP and Peter Robinson of the Democratic Unionist party.

Mr Blair said he was doing everything possible to defeat the Government, but denied he was courting Mr Trimble. He added: "I will try anything I can because it is my duty to bring this government down because it is failing. Of course we keep in touch with David and his party and will continue to do so."

Other police forces are also showing extra vigilance. A spokesman for Greater Manchester Police, which had to deal with a devastating IRA bomb in June, said it was deploying a "high-profile" police presence to reassure the public. Cabinet ministers believe the IRA will put off a renewal of the ceasefire until days before a general election to put the maximum pressure on Mr Blair and a possible incoming Labour government.

They are convinced that hopes of an extended ceasefire at Christmas will be dashed by the IRA. One minister said: "They have become highly active and are clearly planning attacks."

## UN agrees at last on new leader

David Usborne New York

An international diplomatic stalemate ended yesterday when Kofi Annan, a 58-year-old Ghanaian, was appointed as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Mr Annan will formally succeed Boutros Boutros-Ghali next month. Mr Boutros-Ghali wanted to stay on for a second five-year term, but was forced finally to stand down after pressure from the United States.

In an old-fashioned diplomatic spat, France, angered at Washington's stance, had been determined to support the incumbent, and to resist the appointment of Mr Annan. Yesterday, however, France decided that it would withdraw its veto against him.



Annan: French withdrew veto

## Seven notes that bring one currency

Sarah Helm Dublin

John Major has said he wants to "wait and see" before he decides whether to join monetary union.

Yesterday, he (and everybody else) could see just what the shape and size of a single currency will be, though a British decision on membership seemed as far away as ever.

Depicting bridges between nations and gateways to the future, Europe's new Euro banknotes were unveiled "at the dawning of a new common Europe".

But what is this new common Europe? According to the map on the notes parts of Finland are missing. Russia is there, but Turkey is not. Britain is clearly part of Europe but looks somewhat mis-shapen. The Shetlands are missing and Wales will be unhappy with its bulge.

There are no people in this future Europe; the designs show monuments and bridges but no Europeans.

"The difficulty with people," said Alexander Lamfalussy, president of the European Monetary Institute, fore-runner of the European Central Bank, "is that people usually belong to a country..."

As for the shape of Europe, Mr Lamfalussy admitted: "A few islands have disappeared and out all the countries are entirely covered." But, he added, optimistically, "the geography will be sorted out".

Reaction to the designs was generally favourable. "Pretty. Stylish. Very European," were some comments. "Bland" was another.

The faces of the notes, in seven denominations from 5 to 500 Euro, depict windows and gateways from the seven "ages" of European cultural history.

including classical, baroque and modern 20th century. The reverse side shows a bridge design from the same periods.

None of the pictures, however, shows an identifiable European monument. All are an amalgam of different European styles.

The name, euro, appears in both the Latin and Greek alphabet. An Austrian artist, Robert Kalina, who the contest for the note design after each member state submitted its own offerings.

The most contentious issue, of whether a national symbol will appear on the notes, remains to be decided.

One-fifth of the note's reverse side has been left clear for such an eventual, but the Queen will not know if she is to appear until the middle of next year.

Close by, at Dublin Castle Europe's heads of government at their summit meeting were having difficulty sketching out their future map of Europe.

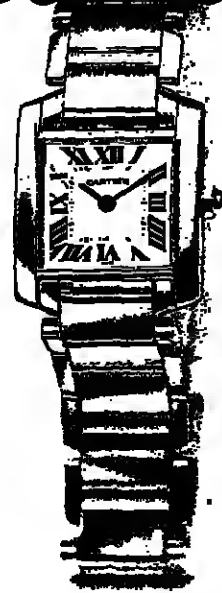
How many countries will be "in" or "out" of the Euro-zone remained as unclear as ever. But Europe's leaders were able to proclaim a breakthrough in building the architecture for the single currency zone.

Agreement on the stability pact, which will govern economic policy after the creation of the euro, will be taken as yet another sign of Europe's political will to launch the Euro in 1999.

Mr Lamfalussy proclaimed the unveiling of the Euro notes as a milestone. Although the notes will not start circulating until 2002, yesterday's date was, he said, of "major historic significance."

It seemed to have escaped Mr Lamfalussy's notice that the notes were being launched on Friday 13th.

# Cartier



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## news

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# E. coli infection spreads to nurse

Steve Boggan  
 Chief Reporter

A nurse has contracted poisoning by *E. coli* bacteria while treating victims struck down by the epidemic sweeping central Scotland, health officials confirmed last night.

Despite wearing a protective mask, gloves and clothing, the nurse at Falkirk Royal Infirmary fell ill last Tuesday after caring for two patients on a ward. She is now recovering at home, but the fact that she was poisoned simply from contact with the patients demonstrates how infectious *E. coli* 0157 can be.

"We believe this is a cross-infection from contact with patients rather than contact with infected food and it has caused us all some distress," Douglas Harper, the hospital's medical director, said. "It has certainly concentrated our minds on how infectious this organism is."

Details of the auxiliary nurse's condition were released within hours of Sir David Carter, Scotland's chief medical officer, telling journalists that the outbreak would soon be over. The total number of those infected is just below 400 and 11 people have died, but for two days running, there had been no new cases reported.

However, before the nurse's condition was made public, Sir David said: "We are particularly concerned now about the danger of secondary spread from one individual to another. That has not materialised as a major problem in this outbreak but I think the more days that go by the more confident one will be in saying that this outbreak is not just contained now, it is now over."

The correct word at present I think is the word contained. "When we get into next week, towards the end of next week, if there are no new cases then I think we could be confident in saying that it was over."

The nurse, who has not been named, was part of the hospital's team handling the *E. coli* outbreak. During the past few weeks, the team had treated 18 patients but only two were remaining when she became ill last Tuesday.

"She is fine now, but we are concerned that she became infected at all," Mr Harper said. "We practice barrier nursing, which involves wearing a mask, gloves and protective clothing. However, not to be too indelicate, a lot of diarrhoea is involved. Some of the people affected are quite debilitated and caring for them requires a lot of personal hygiene. Somehow, this nurse, who is very experienced, accidentally became exposed and was inadvertently infected. It is a warning to people at home - good personal hygiene can stop this spreading."

Earlier, Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, travelled to Aberdeen with Sir David to meet Professor Hugh Pennington, the man in charge of medical inquiries into the outbreak.

Sir David said: "Mr Forsyth promised unlimited resources to Professor Pennington and his team, saying they had done 'detective work which Sherlock Holmes would be proud of'. He added: 'As far as Professor Pennington's lab is concerned, of course we will provide help and support. Whatever he wants he will get.'"



Military salute: Cadets passing out at the Sovereign's Parade at Sandhurst in Surrey yesterday. At the ceremony, reviewed by the Duchess of Gloucester, 700 officer cadets were on parade, 212 of whom were being commissioned into the Army, as were 22 cadets from overseas

## significant shorts

### Helicopter crash claims three pilots

A civilian helicopter which went missing with three English pilots on board, prompting a major search, was yesterday found crashed in mountains in the Irish Republic.

Coastguards in Killybegs told Steven Barton, 17, "The offence... is so appalling as to make the blood of every right-thinking person in this country run cold."

### Judge condemns 'perverted and evil teenager'

A "thoroughly perverted and evil" teenager who raped a 93-year-old widow in a churchyard was yesterday ordered to be detained for 12 years.

Judge Anthony Thorpe told Steven Barton, 17, "The offence... is so appalling as to make the blood of every right-thinking person in this country run cold."

### Internet child porn sentence

A man was jailed for two years yesterday after he admitted distributing child pornography on the Internet.

Christopher Wells, 27, had more than 1,100 pictures stored in computer systems, Birmingham Crown Court was told. Wells, of Lewing Avenue, Maldon, in Essex, admitted possessing indecent photographs of children and distributing them between March and August this year.

### Fraud claims at Hackney

A formal challenge to the accounts of Hackney Council, the troubled London borough hit by Labour group splits and allegations of fraud and racism, was made yesterday to the district auditor, Chris Koelbl.

Simon Matthews, Labour housing spokesman for the area, made allegations of corruption against fellow councillors. Steve Boggan

### Priest jailed for child abuse

A Roman Catholic priest who systematically abused boys and girls over a 14-year period was jailed for two-and-a-half years yesterday at Belfast Crown Court.

Father Joseph Steele, originally from the New Lodge area of north Belfast, had admitted a total of 25 charges of indecent assault involving three boys and seven girls between September 1969 and December 1983.

### Four years for cannabis man

A drug grower who catalogued his crop of 845 cannabis plants in a book headed "Captain's Log, Stardate January 1995, Planet Earth," was jailed for four years today, Robin Scott, 47, was sentenced at Truro Crown Court.

### 'Giant sewage tank' outrage

Environmentalists and politicians yesterday criticised Home Office plans to moor a prison ship in Portland Harbour alongside a special conservation area.

Friends of the Earth said the five-deck ship, which could hold 500 inmates, amounted to "a giant sewage tank" Ian Burrell

### Chauffeurs halt strike action

The first ever strike by ministers' chauffeurs - scheduled to start on Monday - has been postponed for special days. The Government has increased its pay offer from 2.3 per cent to just under three per cent. Negotiations are to resume on Monday. Barrie Clement

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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**Bob Monkhouse at the Beeb**

**Victor Wood**

**I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue 3**

**Spend Xmas with Auntie**

**Classic Comedy on Audio Cassette - the ideal stocking filler**

**Hancock's Half Hour 8**

**Barry Took's News Quiz**

**BBC**

## Security bill hits nursery cash

Lucy Ward  
 Education Correspondent

The Government has scrapped plans to bring in nursery vouchers in Northern Ireland next year, prompting renewed claims from Labour that the scheme is collapsing.

Higher spending on security in the province following the ending of the IRA ceasefire early this year has forced education budget cuts, according to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Withdrawing the vouchers, due to be introduced next September, will save £8.3m a year.

Announcing a £60m cut in education spending, Sir Patrick said: "The peace dividend has, alas, been reversed and this obviously has an adverse effect on the provision of public services in Northern Ireland." An extra

£120m was being channelled into law and order and compensation for criminal damage during 1997-98, he said.

The decision puts Northern Ireland out of step with the mainland, where nursery vouchers are due to be launched in April. Labour seized on the reversal as evidence of a breakdown of the controversial pre-school vouchers scheme.

Labour's education spokesman, David Blunkett, said: "The bureaucracy of vouchers is such that even some ministers now realise it makes more sense to provide real nursery places."

The latest blow to the nursery voucher scheme comes just weeks after a Budget announcement of a £56m cut in the money promised on the grounds that pilot schemes showed it was unlikely there would be 100 per cent take-up.

## Pregnant terror suspect 'could lose her baby'

Patricia Wynn Davies  
 Legal Affairs Editor

The terrorism suspect Roisin McAliskey yesterday failed to secure bail while awaiting extradition to Germany after a medical report warned she could lose her unborn child.

Gareth Peirce, her solicitor, told Bow Street magistrates' court that Ms McAliskey's medical needs had been ignored, despite the instructions of Ronald Bartle, the stipendiary magistrate, at her last appearance that she be well cared for.

The doctor's report said that she showed signs of "advanced starvation" due to repeated vomiting, had no access to natural light and was in danger of losing her baby, Ms Peirce said.

The German government is seeking to extradite Ms McAliskey, the 25-year-old



Roisin McAliskey: Starving

daughter of former nationalist MP Bernadette McAliskey, in the wake of the June mortar attack on British Army barracks in Omagh.

Ms McAliskey is being held as a high security prisoner at Holloway women's prison, north London. Her classification would mean she is subject to special supervision, "closed" visits through screens and restricted contact with other prisoners.

Mr Bartle said the medical report made "disturbing reading... I commented on the last occasion that Ms McAliskey's condition should be properly provided for." But ordering that she stay in jail until her next appearance on 20 December, he said: "I feel that my public duty demands that I do not alter the previous ruling."

A Prison Service spokesman said Ms McAliskey was taken to a London hospital on 5 December and had a scan and full examination by a consultant obstetrician. "He confirmed that she was in good general health, that her 16-week pregnancy was progressing normally and that there was no cause for concern."

## Help for child victims

Glenda Cooper

As abuse scandals continue to be exposed in children's homes around the country, we would like you to support our Victims of Abuse appeal to help those who have been made to suffer.

Earlier this year, the toll of years of abuse for more than 100 children in Croyd was highlighted in this newspaper.

The investigation was the launch-pad for a campaign that won government action to tighten standards in children's homes.

This week we revealed that police are seeking 3,000 children who may have been part of

another scandal, in the Northwest.

Our Christmas appeal is in support of work by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, including its helpline, giving direct support to children who have been abused, and projects to help prevent future abuse.

Countless stories from children, in the community as well as in residential care, have never been heard. The NSPCC, Britain's leading charity specialising in child protection and prevention of cruelty, runs more than 120 projects throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, offering counselling

and therapy to abused children as well as carrying out its own investigations into allegations of abuse.

The charity relies on public donations for 85 per cent of its income and we would like you to contribute between now and Christmas.

Your money will go to help projects such as the NSPCC's freephone helpline which takes on average 1,200 calls a week, the London Investigation Team, which works with police and social services to investigate paedophiles, and the Kaleidoscope project in Newcastle, which treats children who have abused other children.

**THE INDEPENDENT/NSPCC Victims of Abuse Appeal**

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# End of an era: the Waleses divorced; the lottery was born; OJ went free – after 313 days in court, McLibel draws to a close

Nicholas Schoon

Britain's longest-ever trial has finally sighed to a close after 313 days. Now all that is awaited after yesterday's closing speeches is the judgement from Mr Justice Bell, and that is not expected until Easter at the earliest.

The defendants, the weary and 'impecunious' McLibel Two, are not optimistic about the judge clearing them of libelling McDonald's. But Helen Morris and David Steel are talking about mounting an appeal if he finds in favour of the

judge said: "This was in the happy days when I knew nothing about this case."

All those months in court have turned neither Ms Steel nor Mr Morris, both unemployed, into smooth-tongued lawyers. "So, um, there you go..." was how he concluded one point.

But their fortitude in refusing to apologise and to take on the task of defending themselves at London's Royal Courts of Justice have made them into counter-culture heroes. They have cost McDonald's a fortune and gained huge publicity for their allegations against the burger chain on the Internet and in press reports around the world. They have become minor celebrities, but it shows no sign of going to their heads. They remain ordinary, rather serious, old-fashioned anarchists.

At lunchtime, as usual, the two defendants and a few supporters went to a student café in the nearby London School of Economics. Meanwhile Mr Rampton's team spurned the delights of the nearest McDonald's and took their permanently-hooked lunchtime places at an Italian restaurant.

Mr Rampton, one of Britain's top libel lawyers, told *The Independent* that Ms Steel and Mr Morris' amateur status had slowed down the case considerably. "It proceeds so much more slowly... it's frustrating in that respect." But his long, long sojourn in Court 35 was no great personal strain. "We're paid to do a job, so it really doesn't matter."

Paid handsomely, in fact: McDonald's legal fees will run to several million pounds and if the judge does award costs and damages against the two defendants they have next to nothing to hand over.

McDonald's claims Mr Morris, a 42-year-old single parent, and Ms Steel, aged 31, were leading lights in the publication and distribution of a leaflet which said that eating McDonald's food could cause bowel and breast cancer and heart disease. (The leaflet also alleged staff at the chain were exploited, ill-paid and would be dismissed if they tried to join a trade union, and that the production of McDonald's food caused hunger in the Third World and the destruction of rainforests. At the top of the leaflet were the words: "McFluencer, McDisase, McFungus and McDeath.")

The defendants, both unemployed and reliant on state benefits, deny publishing the leaflet but argue that its contents are true. Three other leafleters whom McDonald's issued writs against in 1990 apologised, but not the McLibel Two. There have been 130 witnesses cross-examined, and 50 others have submitted statements. "We say the evidence vindicated us on all of the issues raised in the leaflet," said Mr Morris outside the court.



JONATHAN ANSTEE

## Quick-fried guide to McDonald's

■ The McLibel case found its way into the record books by becoming the longest-running civil trial of all time in the UK. The previous longest was 103 courtroom days in March 1972: Arthur Orton was convicted on two counts of perjury for claiming to be Roger Tichborne, brother of Baronet Alfred Tichborne. (Source: Guinness Book of Records, 1996).

■ Linda McCartney, wife of ex-Beatle Paul, has contributed £1,000 to the legal expenses of the defendants.

■ McDonald's is estimated to be paying £4000 a day on legal costs. Total costs could exceed £5m.

■ McDonald's had to pay out \$2.9 million to an 81-year-old woman in Albuquerque, U.S. The lady claimed to have been scalded by its coffee. The company's law firm found that the coffee was served at 82 degrees Centigrade because the heat apparently increased the taste quality.

■ Currently there are 20,000 McDonald's restaurants in 101 countries around the world. The chain has more than 35 million customers a day.

■ McDonald's has opened 212 new restaurants since July 1994.

■ \$3 billion-a-year hamburger multinational, and if that fails of taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights. They claim the trial, which has taken place without a jury, has been oppressive.

The two, who have defended themselves in the absence of legal aid, made closing speeches which occupied more than six weeks. Richard Rampton QC, counsel for McDonald's, has handed in 550 pages of submissions.

And so the final day stuttered out with a series of points of law from both sides. Mr Justice Bell made no secret of his fatigue. When ex-postman David Morris spoke about something that happened in the years of pre-trial manoeuvrings, the

The McLibel Years:

■ Provisional IRA started and ended its ceasefire  
■ Eurostar services started through Channel Tunnel  
■ OJ Simpson's trial started and ended in acquittal  
■ The Oklahoma bombing killed 168

■ Sixteen Primary School children and their teacher killed at Dunblane  
■ Hugh Grant arrested on indecency charge in Los Angeles  
■ Rosemary West jailed for life for Cromwell Street murders  
■ The National Lottery started  
■ Pop group Take That split up

■ Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in Israel  
■ Headmaster Philip Lawrence stabbed to death outside his school  
■ President Mitterrand died of cancer aged 79  
■ The Prince and Princess of Wales divorced

## Labour's 'Today' vote angler is civil servant

Christian Wolmar and John Rentoul

Labour yesterday launched an internal investigation into the attempt by party workers to rig nominations for the BBC Today Personality of the Year Award.

It emerged last night that Jules Hurry, the woman in whose name the fax requesting party workers to nominate Tony Blair for the award was sent, is a civil servant with the Ministry of Agriculture.

It will compound embarrassment in the party over the affair, which wiped the fact that the Tories now have a minority government off the front pages of some newspapers.

It became clear yesterday that the plan was part of a "fish-farming" exercise to try to influence phone-in programmes, local newspapers and other media by getting Labour supporters to write or phone. There is a section, staffed by two volunteers, at the party HQ with the task of carrying out this work, called the "Audience Participation Unit".

The official version was that the unit was "reactive rather proactive" and "helps Labour supporters who want to write to newspapers or get their views across in other ways."

But a former Labour party worker said that there was a concerted attempt to influence media. He said: "It was called fish farming. That was the name for doing things that were seen as putting people into the party's campaign headquarters for elections."

He said that the party ran an "op-



Tony Blair: Did not make shortlist

eration during the 1987 election campaign to organise people to take part in phone-ins. However, the scheme was dropped after a woman who had arranged a Tory minister became the subject of tabloid investigations.

Another Labour insider said: "The key to these operations was to never write anything down. It should always be done by word of mouth." He said there was no doubt that the Tories did this sort of thing all the time, but "they are a bit cleverer than us in the way they go about it."

Yesterday Tory Central Office refused to deny that it had also run similar exercises.

Asked about allegations by a former Welsh Tory, Elywn Jones, that the Tories had done the same thing two years ago when John Major, at the nadir of his popularity, came second

to the late Roy Castle, a spokesman said: "These are allegations by a disaffected Tory."

The Today award now appears so flawed that the BBC will consider scrapping it. Mr Major, who has been shortlisted again, finished second in the past two years, despite the fact that his party trailed well behind Labour in polls throughout that period. In the Eighties, Margaret Thatcher won the award for woman of the year eight times out of nine.

While the Princess Royal was the other winner, it may have been quiet efforts by Central Office that ensured she saw off what must have been strong competition from the Queen and the Princess of Wales.

Mr Blair, who did not make the shortlist anyway, said the person involved had tried to drum up support through an "excess of zeal". He told the Today programme: "As soon as we learned about it, it was stopped."

Labour also attempted to sow confusion about how exactly the exercise was carried out. Labour's election supremo, Peter Mandelson, denied Ms Hurry was responsible for the vote-rigging drive.

He said it was not her but "another, more junior, member of staff" who was behind it. However, he refused to elaborate on the identity of the person responsible.

In a damage-limitation exercise, Tom Sawyer, the general secretary of the party, announced the holding of an internal inquiry into the incident but there are no plans to publish the result.

Leading article, page 15

## It's just not cricket: Botham Jnr sells his soul to rugby

David Llewellyn

The name is the same, but not the game. Liam Botham may be a chip off the old block but he is still his own man. There was no way that he could have emulated the feats of his father, former England Test cricket all-rounder Ian Botham, who singlehandedly, and in one bound, won the Ashes when Liam was just four years old, in 1981.

Now, 15 years on, Liam has decided on a professional sporting career – in rugby. He could have carried on playing cricket with Hampshire, but yesterday Liam, a former Rossall School pupil who plays at outside centre, signed a three-year contract with Courage First Division club West Hartlepool.

"While it wasn't an easy decision to make," said Liam, 6ft 1in and almost 14 stone. "I've discussed the position, not only with my father, who has never pushed me to follow either route, but also with professional advisers. I've always had a slight preference for rugby."

Mark Ring, West's director of rugby and a former Wales international, said: "It is virtually impossible to combine summer and winter sports at a professional level these days. Liam has had a taste of cricket at a professional level and now has the challenge ahead of professional rugby at a national level. I think he has a great future."

Liam appears to be blessed with the same team of script writers as his father. On his debut for Hampshire against Middlesex last season, Botham Junior claimed five wickets for 67 runs, including the scalp of former England cap-



Liam Botham: First Division contract

tain Mike Gatting. It does not stop there. Last October, when he made his senior debut for West Hartlepool he scored a try against Watsonians.

Rugby certainly looks a likelier bet for the Legeod's son. There is a hard core of realism running through the youngster. He confided recently: "I can never win at cricket having this name. If I do badly they would say I was only in the side because of whose son I am." But there was a wistfulness when he told the interviewer: "... I wish I could be called plain Liam Bloggs."

Somehow it seems improbable that a Botham could be plain anything. Quite rightly he is being pragmatic and playing to his strengths. And Bloggs or Botham, Liam could well make his name in rugby.

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# Major tells MPs: obey and survive

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major will be able to soldier on until an election date of his own choosing, he said yesterday – providing his warring backbenchers "behave".

"I have no doubt, providing people behave themselves, we can get through to our preferred date," he said in Dublin. "I am not going to indicate any particular dates. Certainly, I think we will be able to hang on to our preferred date."

But Tony Blair, Labour leader, also in Dublin, declared: "The Government majority has gone and we will continue to pile on the pressure until the Government has gone too. This is a government that has ceased to have any real purpose but its own survival, and the country needs and deserves better."

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, yesterday was forced to re-arrange an historic visit to Cyprus after the Government lost its Commons majority in the Barnsley East by-election.

The first bilateral visit by a British foreign secretary to the divided Mediterranean island in 30 years was brought forward so that he could return for Monday's crucial vote on European fishing policy.

The Government faces defeat in the vote without the support of the Ulster Unionists. 12 months after the Government was defeated on the same issue, Tory MPs have been given a three-line whip to make sure they are in Westminster for the vote.

Mr Rifkind's hastily re-arranged plans showed the difficulty facing ministers in the run-up to the general election.

The Prime Minister now effectively has to run a minority government after the rejection of the Tory whip by the MP Sir John Goss, in protest at what

a hospital in his constituency, Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, said he had "beaten over backwards" to answer Sir John's demands and was not planning further concessions. Mr Dorrell also appealed to Euro-sceptic Tory MPs to back the Government.

Some ministers believe the in-fighting over Europe is now terminal for the Tory party. "There is no sign of us pulling out of this before the election. I am just waiting to have a go at them when we lose," one pro-European minister said.

The Euro-sceptics remain convinced they can harden policy to rule out entry into a single currency early in the early spring. "Ken Clarke will be forced to go along with it," one leading backbench Euro-sceptic said.

More than 100 Tory MPs are preparing to put a commitment in their election addresses saying they would not vote for a single currency in the next Parliament, flouting current government policy to keep the option open.

Labour pledged to herry the Government out of office at the earliest opportunity after it comfortably held Barnsley East with a majority of 12,181 in spite of a low turnout. John Prescott, the party's deputy leader, challenged Mr Major to call the by-election in the Tory seat of Wirral South, where an election is pending following the death of Barry Porter.

Barnsley East result: Jeff Ennis (Lab) 13,683 (76.4%), David Willis (LD) 1,502 (8.4%), Miss Jane Ellison (C) 1,299 (7.2%), Ken Capstick (Socialist Labour Party) 949 (5.3%), Count Nicholas Tibbitt (UK Independence Party) 378 (2.1%), Mr Julie Hyland (Socialist Equality Party) 89 (0.5%), Lab maj 12,181 (68.9%), 0.2% swing Lab to LD. Electorate 55,129; turnout 17,990 (32.7%). 1992 Lab seat 24,777 (63.0%); turnout 39,314 (72.7%), Patchett (Lab) 38,346 (77.2%), Proctor (C) 5,569 (11.2%), Argenti (LD) 3,999 (8.6%).



The toast is Labour: Jeff Ennis, by-election victor, breakfasting with his wife Margaret and their children yesterday morning

Photograph: PA

## Echoes of 1979 as Ulster holds key to power

Colin Brown

Ulster MPs could again bring down the Government, ending 18 years of Tory rule as they began, with a vote of no confidence in the Commons.

On the night that James Callaghan's Labour government fell, the confidence vote turned on one man: Frank Maguire, an independent republican from Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

All day speculation had raged about whether Mr Maguire, a cheerful landlord in the border "bandit" country, would turn up to rescue the Prime Minister.

When he arrived at the Commons, there were sighs of relief that he would save Labour from defeat.

But as 10pm approached and MPs crowded in for the vote, it became clear he had no such intention. He told angry Labour MPs that he had turned up "to



Jim Callaghan: History of his overthrow may be repeated

abstain in person". Dennis Skinner, the left-wing Labour MP for Bolsover, remonstrated with Mr Maguire behind the Speaker's chair as the voting took place, tugging him to go into the division lobby with Labour.

But Mr Maguire, a big man, would not budge. The result, when it was read out, produced

cheers on both sides. By then, the Labour government was exhausted. It had suffered more than 30 defeats in its attempts to soldier on after the Lib-Lab pact had broken down.

The Prime Minister's parliamentary aide, Roger Stott, now a backbench Labour MP, said: "It is draining and sapping when you have no majority. You have to make sure everybody is available for the vote: the sick are brought in."

"It was a dreadful situation and it was predictable that on one night, all the forces would combine to bring us down. We won on the big things, but they just kept chipping away."

Margaret Thatcher's opposition pursued the Labour gov-

ernment relentlessly through the Winter of Discontent after the Prime Minister had failed to go for the autumn 1978 election everyone expected.

Two of her biggest trouble-makers were backbenchers, Norman Tebbit and the late Nicholas Ridley.

The Labour government fended off defeat by trying to reach alliances with the minor parties. The three Welsh Nationalist MPs were promised a Bill to help miners who had pneumoconiosis. The Ulster Unionists were promised extra seats in Westminster and a gas link to the mainland.

One minister yesterday recalled being told during a debate to offer them an electricity

link to the mainland to avoid a defeat.

The electricity interconnector has yet to be built. It is being delayed by a decision by Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, to refer part of the route to an inquiry after criticism of unsightly pylons being strung across part of Scotland.

The *coup de grâce* was delivered on night of high drama. As a symbol of Labour's industrial troubles, the staff at the Commons were on strike, and no hot food or drink was available in the Palace.

The shadow of Ireland again fell over Westminster after Labour's defeat when, in the brief lull before the election campaign, Mrs Thatcher's chief

strategist and Northern Ireland spokesman, Airey Neave, was assassinated by a car bomb at the Commons by the INLA, a break-away terror group from the IRA.

John Major is expected to commit the Government on Monday to implementing a selective cull of beef herds, beginning in Northern Ireland, which may buy more time from the Ulster Unionists.

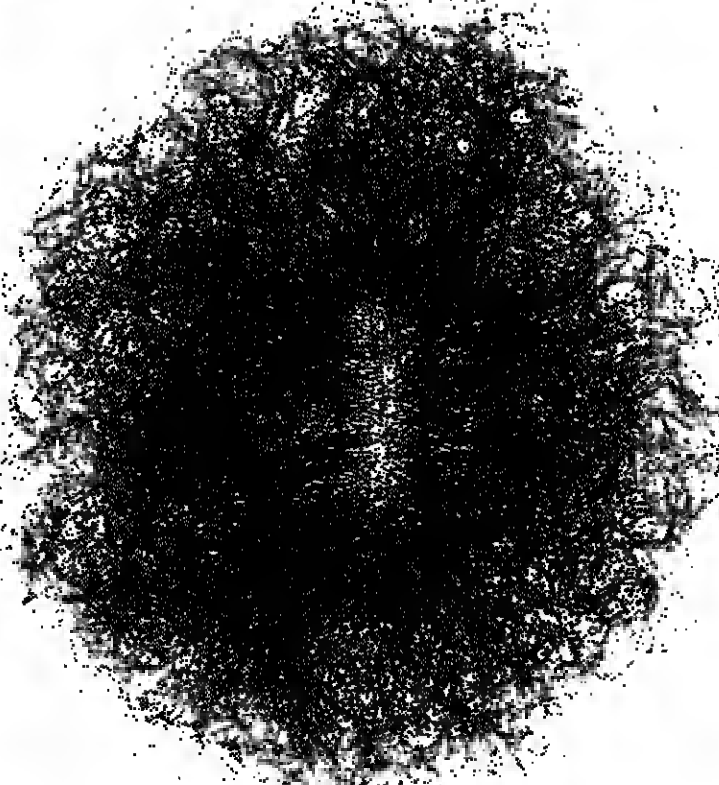
Ministers expect David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, to try to bring down the Government in March.

Mr Major may therefore try to beat the Ulstermen to the punch, and go to the country on a date of his own choosing at the end of March.

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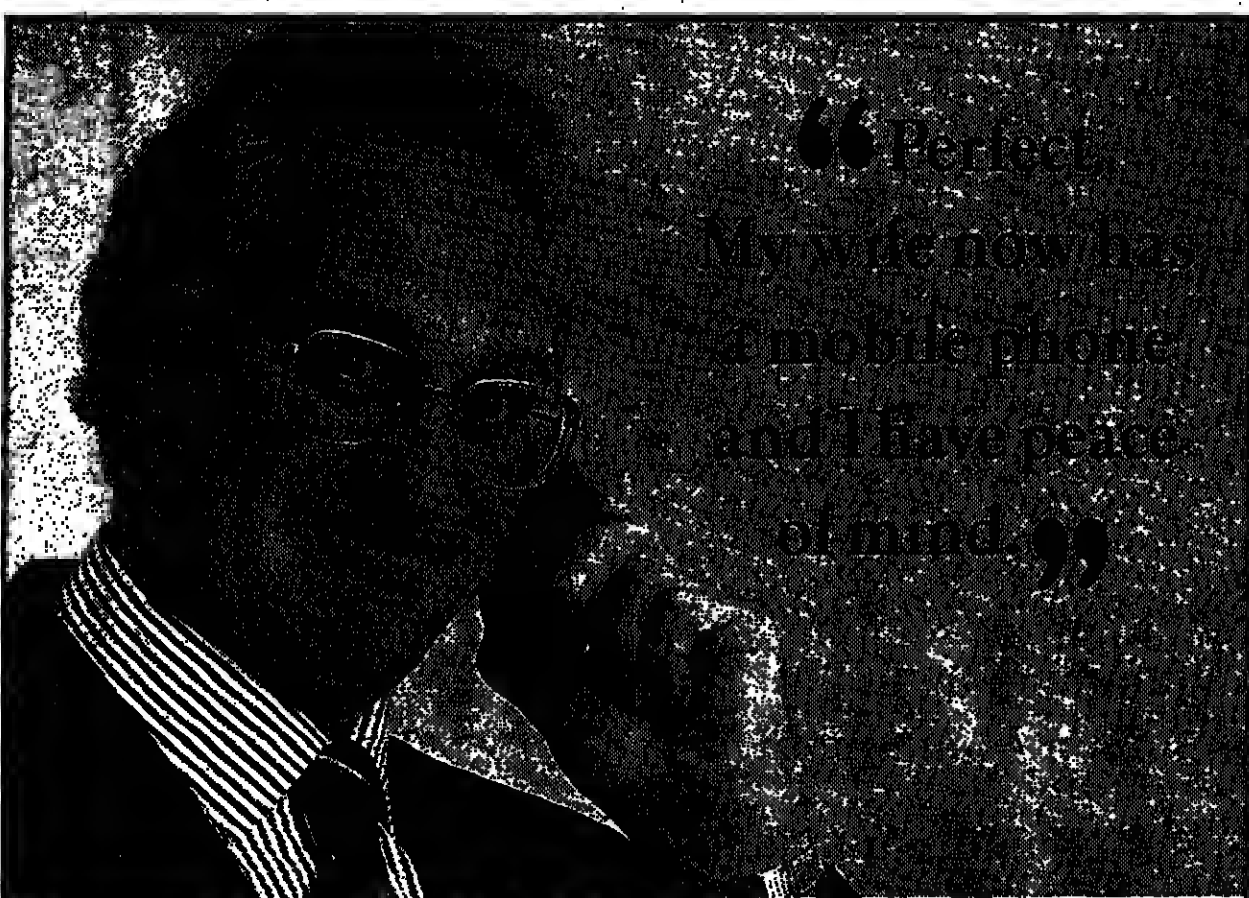
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## news

# Rabbits on the roof in Britain's greenest house

A house so green that rabbits will live off its turf roof has been given the go-ahead for Kentish Town, north London, despite the opposition of the local planning authority.

Peter Cumming can now start work on a £250,000 housing development that will feed power from solar panels into the national grid and recycle water from baths and washing machines. Two sections of roof will be insulated with soil a metre deep growing meadow grasses and herbs. A tree is also likely.

Rabbits came into the scheme when council officials suggested to Mr Cumming that neighbours might be disturbed by roof-top mowing. "I said 'Well, maybe I should have some rabbits' and since then I have been rather hoist by my own petard," Mr Cumming, an urban planner, said.

Permission for the house and three flats was secured when John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, rejected Camden council's objection. It was not averse to the solar panels or even the rabbits

## Stephen Goodwin on the new home that even recycles its own water

but objected to the size of the development in a compact area and the loss of daylight for neighbouring properties.

But Mr Gummer and Mr Cumming, a former building and planning inspector, said homes in a nearby council development were closer together. "They have gone for medieval spacing; neighbours can shake hands from their windows."

He calculates that the panels will produce the equivalent of about half the electricity used by the four homes. It will not be used directly but sold to the national grid. Solar water-heating will further reduce energy demand and in the basement there will be a communal recycling bank and bicycle store. "What we are attempting to

show is that even in really urban areas you can do the same sort of thing that up to now has only been done in places like the Welsh hills," Mr Cumming said.

He had expected more co-operation from the council, which has publicly advocated use of solar power and turf roofs. The site, in Talacre Road, is a derelict air-raid shelter and former lift factory. Construction is to begin in the New Year and be completed by March 1998.

Mr Cumming is already being showered with advice about the rabbits, including a warning about them being plucked by kestrels marauding from Hampstead Heath. The grass area will be fenced like any other roof garden and the rabbits will be able to burrow beneath the turf. "I will be living in one of the homes and looking after them," the developer said.

As for numbers and the rabbit's renowned reproductive abilities, Mr Cumming is planning for just two of the creatures. "And they will probably be both male - a couple of limp-wristed rabbits might be best."



Hop to it: Peter Cumming with one of this rooftop croppers, supplied to him by Animal Crackers, of Hampstead

Photograph: Philip Meech

## Solar power gets a plug in 100 schools

Schools will be turned into miniature power stations under an experimental scheme to install solar panels in their playgrounds, writes Lucy Ward.

One hundred schools taking part in the government-backed project will be able to generate free electricity in return for a one third contribution to the start-up costs.

They hope to produce enough power from the panels, mounted in "fun" shapes or bicycle sheds or purpose-built structures, to run computer suites, with any extra being sold to the National Grid.

Pupils will also be able to use computers to analyse data from the panels, calculating the

amount of energy generated and possibly adjusting controls for maximum efficiency.

Schools and further education colleges are being invited to take part in the scheme by a consortium aiming to promote the use of solar power in the UK. The partners in the Solar Programme, which include universities, electricity companies and green energy research groups, hope the experiments will demonstrate the efficiency of solar energy.

Schools are likely to have to contribute around £3,500 to join. The remaining costs will be met by £1m government cash and £2.5m from the Solar Consortium.

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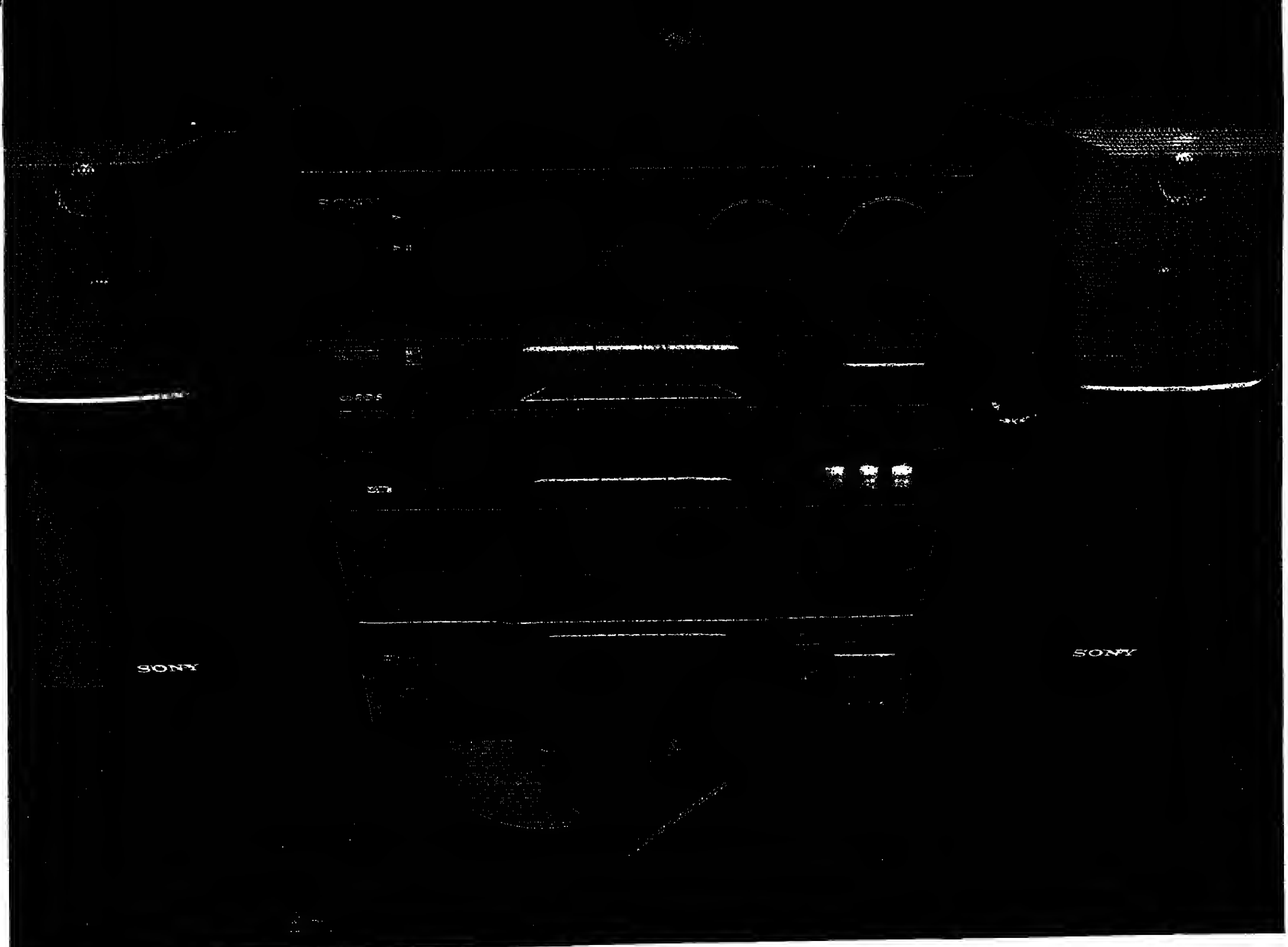


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# Dealers in combat knives face jail

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

A Government-backed Private Members' Bill to jail dealers in combat knives won all-party approval yesterday as it received an unopposed Commons Second Reading.

Jimmy Wray, the Bill's sponsor, secured the backing of the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, for the measure, despite initial Government resistance on the ground that "combat" weapons could not be distinguished from household knives.

Under the Bill, it would be an offence, punishable by up to two years in jail, to market a knife in a way which "indicates or suggests that it is suitable for combat" or will "stimulate or encourage violent behaviour". It will also be an offence to sell, hire or offer for sale a knife suitable for combat. Whether a particular knife is "suitable for combat" will be for the courts to decide.

Mr Wray, who came top of the private members' ballot, criticised the Government's failure to come up with a workable definition of a combat knife sooner. "It is not beyond the wit of reasonable people to tell the difference between a knife designed to cut through bread and one designed to cut through people."

If someone could show a lawful purpose for a knife, it should not be an offence, he said. "I believe we can get the balance right."

Mr Wray, MP for Glasgow Govan, conceded that the carrying of an offence weapon in a public place was already an offence.

We must also tackle supply by banning the sale of weapons that have only the purpose of wounding and killing. The tide of public opinion has turned against these weapons being available."

The MP said the names of some knives - including an "SAS shoulder-holster knife" and a "Rambo short sword" - alone betrayed their purpose. The Bill, a response to the appeal by Frances Lawrence after the stabbing of her late husband, Philip, would also extend police powers to allow an officer of superintendent rank or above to order the stopping and searching of people or vehicles within a specified area for 24 hours, renewable for 24 hours.

David Maclean, the Home Office minister, pledged the Government's support, saying: "I believe the proposals in this Bill will make a significant contribution in stamping out the unpleasant and unacceptable ways combat knives are marketed."

Alun Michael, his Labour shadow, said: "We are pleased that the Government has finally acted to curb the menace of combat knives."

The Bill has been welcomed as a step towards changing the culture of violence by the Police Superintendents' Association, although it had lobbied the Home Office for an all-out ban. But the Police Federation, which represents rank and file officers, said yesterday that the measure did not go far enough.

"The Bill as drafted will not in our view result in a legal ban on the sale of such knives," a spokesman said. "We fear they will simply be sold as 'sporting' weapons."



Beauty and the beasts: Actors James Horne, standing, and Andrew Ryan, who play ugly sisters Sharon and Tracey, preparing for a rehearsal of the pantomime Cinderella before their season opens at the Theatre Royal, Bath, on 19 December  
Photograph: John Voos

## Gore back in vogue for anti-fur campaign

Michael Streeter

After the models, the nudity and the glamour, comes the harsh reality.

A graphic anti-fur campaign was launched yesterday which focuses on the reality of the dead animals which are used for fur coats rather than the celebrities who oppose them.

The campaign by Respect for Animals employs posters depicting the skinned head of a fox emerging, teeth-bared, from a fur coat, together with the caption: "Do you have the face to wear fur?"

Its style is in grim contrast with the glamour of the fur industry.



Skin deep: The poster designed 'to make fur-wearers think'

weeks ago by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) on which models posed naked under the caption: "Turn your back on fur."

Both are a response to a growing perception that after years of social rejection, fur is fashionable once more. Fashion designers Karl Lagerfeld, Gucci, Prada and Amanda Wakeley have been flouting it on the catwalk and French Elle magazine recently declared: "It's okay to wear fur again."

Yesterday's campaign was launched by the singer Cathy Dennis, fashion designer David Fielden and the Labour MP Ken Livingstone.

Its spokesman, Mark Glover, said the poster had been cleared by the Advertising Standards Authority, and justified its graphic nature. "We think it goes far enough but not too far. Obviously it's designed to make fur-wearers think about the garments they're wearing and where they come from. That's our object and we feel this is the best way of achieving this."

Mr Glover added that 95 per cent of people in Britain were against wearing fur, but he warned that the current fashion for fake fur meant a growing acceptance of the real thing.

Many large department stores, including Selfridges, now have a no-fur policy, refusing to stock garments featuring any fur. Harrods no longer has a fur department but sells garments with fur-trim collars.

Twelve years ago, fur sales in Britain totalled £20m and by 1989 had dropped to £11m. But recently sales have started to creep up again and the British Fur Trade Association reported imports of fur into Britain of £22m in 1994, up from £18m the previous year. The Fur Education Council claimed sales were up 30 per cent last year.

The poster was received badly by the fur-selling trade. At outfitters Swaine Adeney Briggs and Herbert Johnson, in central London, retail manager Richard Jagg-Powles described the poster as "horrendous" but said it would not prevent him ordering more than 100 mink, sable and fox-fur hats a year.

"Wearing fur is more natural than bringing oil out of the ground to make a man-made coat," he said.

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"Wearing fur is more natural than bringing oil out of the ground to make a man-made coat," he said.

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## international

## significant shorts

## Mandela gives right chance for pardons

President Nelson Mandela yesterday extended the scope of South Africa's post-apartheid "truth commission" to include a white rightist attempt to derail democracy and gave offenders five months longer to seek a pardon. Those guilty of human rights abuses in the fight over apartheid would have until May to apply for amnesty. Mr Mandela set 10 May 1994, the day of his inauguration as the country's first democratically elected president, as the cut-off date for crimes that could qualify for a pardon. *Reuters - Pretoria*

## France faces justice reforms

The French justice minister, Jacques Toubon, promised to set up a commission to consider reform of the court system, following remarks by President Jacques Chirac on the independence of the judiciary. But he declined to endorse Mr Chirac's suggestion that the appointment of law officers could cease to be in the gift of the government. Mr Chirac is the first president to broach the possibility of severing the link between certain groups of law officers and the justice ministry. *Paris - Mary Dejevsky*

## Milosevic offers to let observers check elections

President Slobodan Milosevic offered to let international observers check the fairness of local elections which the opposition say were rigged. Mr Milosevic, under pressure from the US, protested in a letter to Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, that Serbia had a healthy democracy and accused the opposition Zajedno (Together) coalition of "political terrorism". *Reuters - Belgrade*

## Saudi Arabia behead male 'witch'

Saudi Arabia beheaded a Syrian man by the sword for practising witchcraft, the state-run Saudi television reported. An interior ministry statement said a court had decided on the maximum penalty because of what it considered the dangerous effect witchcraft could have on individuals and society. *Reuters - Dubai*

## Nazi gold profit

The Swiss National Bank acknowledged that it had profited from business with gold plundered by Nazi Germany but said it had not dealt with any gold from concentration camp victims. *AP - Zurich*

## Dublin summit: Germans bow to French demands on 'stability pact' to police single currency

Sarah Helm Dublin

A hard-fought deal on how to police the future single currency was finally achieved at the European summit in Dublin yesterday, giving important new impetus to monetary union.

Germany, which has been insisting on the strictest rules for a future "stability pact," had to bow to French demands for a more flexible system. The stability pact will be the rulebook for countries inside the euro-zone, setting out a system of fines and penalties to be levied against countries which let their economies slip out of line.

Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, yesterday declared that the rules would mean that the euro would be "a strong currency." Germany would agree to accept fines for exceeding budget deficit rules only in the case of very deep recession, exceeding 2 per cent negative growth. Mr Waigel rejected suggestions that German's hard line was an attempt to dominate decision-making, saying that it was not some "Teutonic stability craze."

However, a last minute compromise formula allowed France to claim that it had won some concessions from Bonn. France and other member states have demanded less severe penalty rules, arguing that a degree of political control and flexibility should be introduced. France is concerned that the single currency will be controlled

solely by technocrats and bankers inside the future European Central Bank.

However, Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, was determined to maintain a tough negotiating stance in order to shore up confidence among the German public that the euro will be as strong as the mark. Latest opinion polls show as few as 16 per cent of Germans support the coming of the euro.

There were already signs yesterday that leaders were moving on to discuss the next contentious issue: who should

## Europe's leaders are determined to win over a sceptical public

enforce the fines. Under the Maastricht Treaty it is envisaged that finance ministers will act as judges, ruling against recalcitrant member states. But proposals for a wider form of informal economic government to run the Euro zone - termed a "stability council" - are gathering pace.

Negotiations on the final stability pact deal, which were carried out by EU finance ministers, were long and tense. All member states agreed that countries which allow their public deficits to exceed three per cent of gross domestic product after the launch of the euro,

should be subject to penalty procedures. Under these procedures each member state would have to submit its budget proposals to the European Commission and the European finance ministers would hear Commission recommendations on which countries are running out of line.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, has had to fend off accusations that Britain might be subject to the rules even if it remains outside the single currency. Mr Clarke has won assurances that the rules and fines would not affect Britain if it does not join the euro.

The dispute which climaxed in Dublin arose over when exceptions could be made, allowing countries to escape fines, because of exceptional circumstances, such as recession or natural disasters.

In the final deal, Germany achieved its desired 2 per cent upper limit. However, agreement was reached that countries whose economies hit recession should be allowed to argue an "exceptional circumstance" on a case by case basis. This means that France had its bottom line written into the deal. However, in an addendum, countries did agree that they would endeavour not to argue exceptional circumstances in cases of negative growth of up to 0.75 per cent. The decision on whether to let individual countries off the fines procedures would be decided by a qualified majority vote amongst European Union finance ministers.



Grin and bear it: Kenneth Clarke and John Major arrive in Dublin yesterday. Photograph: PA

## Collins's way with words miffs Mafia stronghold

Andrew Gumbel Rome

The citizens of Reggio Calabria are furious, and all because of the Collins English Dictionary. Anyone thinking of visiting the city, on the tip of the Italian boot, would do well to keep any copies of the offending publication out of sight for fear of a lynching. Misinformed, malicious and violently racist - such are some of the milder words being used about HarperCollins these days.

The reason? Collins put out a press release listing a few of the new words and phrases they have come across in recent research and will now consider for inclusion in the next edition. One phrase was "Reggio Calabria Syndrome", to define the mysterious symptoms affecting gangsters and others living in Mafia-controlled areas.

The term was picked up from Channel 4's *Europe Express* and referred to research by Francesco Aragona, a professor at the University of Messina who has examined the corpses of mafia victims in the Reggio area and discovered their organs show the sort of stress levels more commonly associated with 70-year-old stroke or heart-attack victims.

Sticking to the label "Reggio Calabria Syndrome" on to this phenomenon might seem harmless enough but does not take into account the toughness of Italians when it comes to the judgement, or perceived judgement, of foreigners. "This is a piece of pseudo-culture that... presumes to make judgements that have no relationship to reality," said the city's deputy bishop, Salvatore Nunnari. Never mind that Reggio is regularly cited as the murder

capital of Italy, or that this week its most prominent anti-Mafia magistrate said his efforts to fight organised crime were on the brink of collapse.

Much of the indignation has centred on the notion that Collins would put such a phrase in their dictionary on the basis of a mere television programme. Some of the critics might be surprised to know that Collins feels the same way. "With only citation, we wouldn't dream of putting it in," said the dictionary's managing editor, Diana Treffer.

Which rather takes the venom out of the affair, though you would not know it from the Italian reaction. Someone had better pass the message on quickly, before the high stress levels down south mutate from Reggio Calabria Syndrome into a life-threatening case of Aggravated Collins Syndrome.

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£10,000 - £24,999	5.30	4.24	£50,000 - £99,999	3.90	3.12
£2,500 - £9,999	4.65	3.72	£25,000 - £49,999	3.45	2.76
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£25,000 or more	5.60	4.48	£500 - £2,499	1.76	1.40
£10,000 - £24,999	5.18	4.14	<b>POSTAL 71 (Monthly)</b>		
£2,500 - £9,999	4.55	3.64	£100,000 or more	3.88	3.10
£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.40	£50,000 - £99,999	3.83	3.06
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£50,000 or more	4.60	3.68	£10,000 - £24,999	3.62	2.10
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£10,000 - £24,999	4.05	3.24	£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.40
£2,500 - £9,999	3.00	2.40	<b>POSTAL ACCOUNT* (Annual)</b>		
£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.40	Can now be operated through branches		
<b>POSTAL 90 (Monthly)</b>			£50,000 or more	3.85	3.08
£50,000 or more	4.51	3.61	£25,000 - £49,999	3.25	2.60
£25,000 - £49,999	4.41	3.53	£10,000 - £24,999	3.10	2.48
£10,000 - £24,999	3.98	3.18	£2,500 - £9,999	2.15	1.72
£2,500 - £9,999	2.98	2.37	£500 - £2,499	1.90	1.52
£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.40	£2,500 - £9,999	1.88	1.50
<b>POSTAL 60 (Annual)</b>			£500 - £2,499	1.80	1.44
£100,000 or more	4.10	3.28	<b>POSTAL ACCOUNT* (Monthly)</b>		
£50,000 - £99,999	4.05	3.24	Can now be operated through branches		
£25,000 - £49,999	3.60	2.88	£50,000 or more	3.78	3.02
£10,000 - £24,999	3.05	2.44	£25,000 - £49,999	3.20	2.58
£2,500 - £9,999	2.65	2.12	£10,000 - £24,999	3.06	2.45
£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.40	£2,500 - £9,999	2.13	1.70
<b>POSTAL 60 (Monthly)</b>			£500 - £2,499	1.88	1.50
£100,000 or more	4.03	3.22	<b>GO DIRECT*</b>		
£50,000 - £99,999	3.98	3.18	Can now be operated through branches		
£25,000 - £49,999	3.54	2.85	£50,000 or more	3.85	3.08
£10,000 - £24,999	3.01	2.41	£25,000 - £49,999	3.25	2.60
£2,500 - £9,999	2.62	2.10	£10,000 - £24,999	3.10	2.48
£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.40	£2,500 - £9,999	2.15	1.72
<b>POSTAL 30 (Annual)</b>			£500 - £2,499	1.90	1.52
£50,000 or more	4.00	3.20	£2,500 - £9,999	1.80	1.44
£25,000 - £49,999	3.55	2.84	£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.40
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## international

# High drama as UN picks kindly Kofi

David Usborne  
New York

Amid high drama in New York, Kofi Annan, the kindly but disciplined 58-year-old from Ghana, was abruptly anointed as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations after France yesterday informed colleagues in the Security Council that it would withdraw its veto against him.

The council was expected to complete an official vote selecting Mr Annan later yesterday, he will therefore replace Boutros Boutros-Ghali when his five-year term expires at the end of the month. The choice of Mr Annan will almost certainly be rubber-stamped and therefore made official by the UN's General Assembly on Monday or Tuesday.

Mr Annan, who has been in charge of UN peace-keeping since 1993, quickly emerged as the strong front-runner in a string of informal straw-poll votes held by the Security Council every day since Tuesday. France, however, had been threatening to scupper his chances. On Thursday, the vote count in the council was 14 in favour of Mr Annan and only one against, with France as the lone stand-out.

The French manoeuvring stemmed from its support for a second term for Mr Boutros-Ghali and its anger at the United States for determinedly standing in the Egyptian's way. In November, the US vetoed a formal attempt to reappoint Mr Boutros-Ghali. The French stance against Mr Annan, though short-lived, was in the spirit of a crude tit-for-tat against the US.

Many diplomats had expected France to maintain its position at least into next week to ensure maximum discomfort for the US and also for Britain, which has also been a strong backer of Mr Annan. First whispers of a French change of mind began filtering to New York early yesterday morning, they were sourced to the European Summit in Dublin.

In recent days, Britain has played a pivotal role in helping support to coalesce around Mr Annan. Sir John Weston, Britain's ambassador to the UN, had repeatedly warned that without agreement on Mr Annan, the chance offered to Africa to have one of their own in the post for another five years would be lost.

Yesterday's change of tack is potentially embarrassing for France. It was not clear whether Paris had levered some consolation prize from its allies for acquiescing to Mr Annan's appointment, such as the promise of senior UN positions for French officials.

Currently Under Secretary General for Peace-keeping, Mr Annan commands fierce loyalty among UN officials and is widely liked and respected. This in spite of the fact that under his leadership, the UN's peace-keeping division has suffered some humiliating setbacks.

France's formal objection to Mr Annan is that as a 30-year UN civil servant he is not the best figure to bring fresh energy to the UN. His obscurity beyond the UN also means that he does not instantly have the international stature to be able easily to converse with heads of government.



Family matters: Ghina Bhutto, leader of a faction of the Pakistan People's Party, waves to supporters in Lahore. She is considering standing against her sister-in-law Benazir, the deposed prime minister, in February elections. Photograph: Mohsin Raza/Reuters

## Chirac's second thoughts on media glasnost

Mary Dejevsky  
Paris

After President Jacques Chirac's two-hour television grilling on Thursday night, the Elysée could be forgiven for having second thoughts about its elaborate exercise to engage the President in a "real dialogue" with the people. For the first time, the high, protective walls guarded by the country's political media establishment were breached, a measure of glasnost came to French political broadcasting – and the result was not to the President's advantage.

In place of the flag, anthem and a respectful, almost reverential, tone, Mr Chirac was introduced with racy film-clips contrasting his election promises with his performance in office and asked to defend himself. Instead of deferentially open questions of traditional presidential broadcasts, Mr Chirac was asked real questions, the sort the French "man or woman on the metro" asks, but which political interviewers on French television avoid.

"Why is the country in such a mess?" – "Why did you attack technocrats during your presidential campaign, but now surround yourself with them?" – "What about the political corruption cases, including those of your own Gaullist party?"

When, as with the corruption question, Mr Chirac veered off in another direction, he was hauled back to address the specific point. The two younger interviewers even had the temerity to try the odd interruption.

To British eyes and ears accustomed to the aggressive questioning of politicians on the Today programme or Newsnight, Mr Chirac had an eerie ride. No one was trying to catch him out, no one was trying to make him say anything he did not want to say. Even so, the decision to bring to the interviewing table journalists from outside France's closed political media clique was a bold step, engineered largely by Mr Chirac's daughter, Claude. She masterminded his appeal to the youth vote during the presidential campaign and has since done her utmost to update the way the president is packaged.

Bringing the presentation up to date, however, means the President, too, has to adapt – and the evidence is that there is still some way to go. As some critics of Mr Chirac's performance said yesterday, it was as though Mr Chirac was a spectator of his own government, as though he had nothing to do with decisions taken and could applaud or deplore the government's performance.

## Reno stays in Clinton team

Rupert Cornwell  
Washington

President Bill Clinton has taken more steps towards completing his second term Cabinet by choosing New Mexico Congressman Bill Richardson as Washington's new United Nations Ambassador, the Democratic troubleshooter, William Daley as Commerce Secretary, and by keeping on the controversial Janet Reno as Attorney General.

Of the appointments the most striking is that of Mr Richardson, 49, a Hispanic-American best known as unofficial US envoy to Cuba, North Korea, Burma and Sudan, where this month he negotiated the release of three American hostages held by guerrillas in the south.

A dogged negotiator, he will bring very different qualities to the job currently held by the combative and forthright Madeleine Albright, whom Mr Clinton promoted last week to Secretary of State.

Like Ms Albright, however, he seems assured of speedy confirmation by the Senate – as does Mr Daley, a centrist who played a key role in building the bipartisan coalition on Capitol Hill to vote through the Nafta trade agreement in 1993.

In other moves, Mr Clinton is retaining the services of the efficient Robert Rubin as Treasury Secretary, and was expected to name his aide, Gene Sperling, as head of the National Economic Council, the body coordinating economic policy. If those appointments were plain sailing, however, the re-appointment of Ms Reno was not.

Undoubtedly Mr Clinton – or at least a vocal array of her critics within the White House – would have liked to jettison Ms Reno. To do so, however, would have invited criticism that he was replacing her with a crony at the Justice Department, just as Whitewater and other investigations involving the President and the First Lady were moving into a decisive phase.

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# Nato's megadeath gets a slimmer look

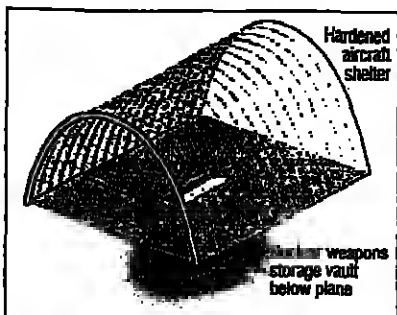
**Christopher Bellamy** examines how the alliance is adapting to new realities of the post-Cold War era

As Nato pledged not to move nuclear weapons out of the territory of new alliance members in East Europe, the US has been withdrawing tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, and The Independent has learnt that only about 200 of its bombs remain as a small "sub-strategic" force.

Instead of detailed plans for the use of these and strategic nuclear weapons in specific scenarios, Nato commanders are now allowed to make plans at short notice based on existing databases about possible targets. Nato countries operating aircraft able to carry nuclear weapons (the US, Britain and France) will in future only be required to maintain one unit trained and ready for nuclear attack.

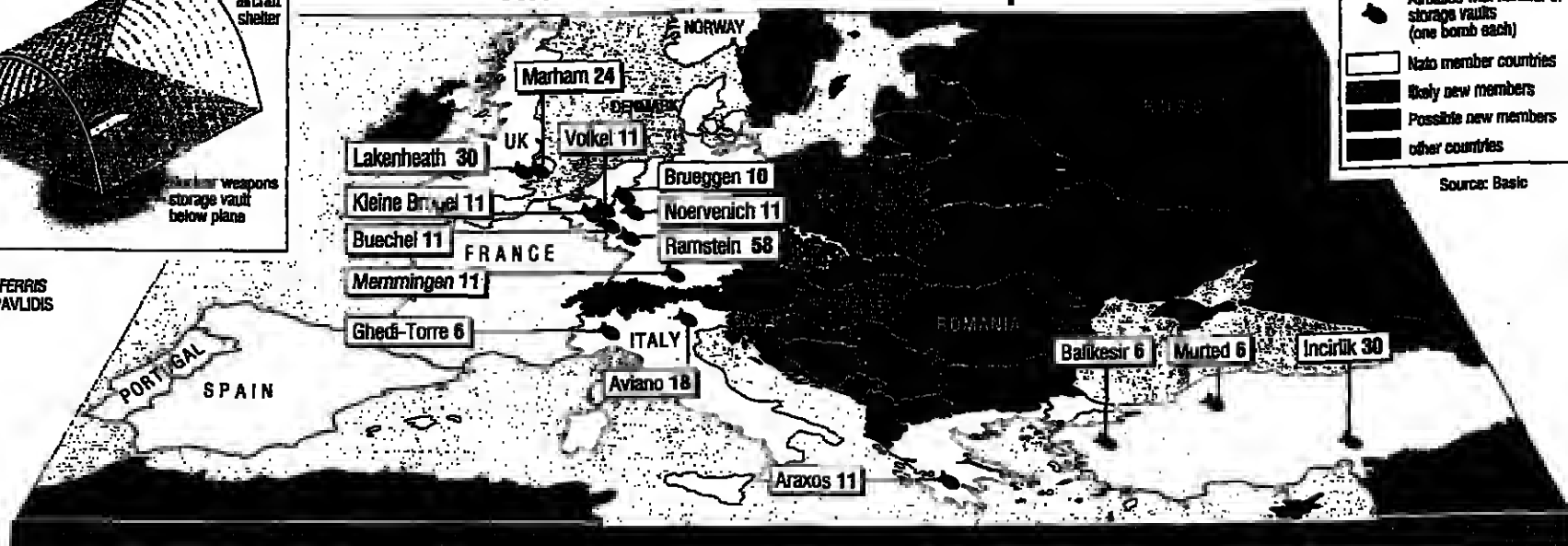
The only US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe are the slim B-61 nuclear bombs which are carried on F-111s, F-15 and F-16 aircraft.

Following the abandonment of the nuclear-weapons storage area at Lakenheath, Suffolk, The Independent



GRAPHIC: KRISTINA FERRIS AND JIM PAVLIDIS

The last nuclear bombs in Europe



The vaults are equipped with... consoles to lift the bombs into aircraft by remote control

ed by Trident missiles with single warheads.

Germany still has the largest nuclear-weapons storage capacity - 101 vaults. The vaults in Germany, Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands and at the US-operated Aviano base in Italy have all been completed and activity is now concentrated on Nato's southern flank. Coincidentally, this is the area where Nato planners feel that a threat from weapons of mass destruction might arise in the future.

Instead of facing an assault from the east towards Western Europe, the sites for the new vaults in Greece and Turkey are closer to countries such as Iraq and Libya, which are seen as potential launch-sites for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

The number of vaults planned at

reported on 28 October that US nuclear weapons had probably all been withdrawn from the UK. But this is now understood to have been premature. Most of the weapons have been withdrawn, but up to 30 may still remain in new weapon-storage vaults situated beneath the hardened shelters where the aircraft which could still carry them are parked.

The idea of weapon-storage vaults was discussed in the early to

mid-1980s and work began in 1987 on the vaults, each of which holds one B-61 US or British WE-177 nuclear bomb.

Originally Nato planned to build 437 such vaults at 26 sites but with the end of the Cold War the Senior Level Protection Group, known by the acronym, Slowing, cut the programme to 208.

The vaults mean that it is much cheaper to store the weapons, as it

is unnecessary to guard a separate site. They also permit the bombs to be loaded into the aircraft in secret, though this might not always be an advantage, as any crews that aircraft were being armed might be an important deterrent in itself.

However, Nato was concerned that the "igloos" which were formerly used to store nuclear weapons were located several miles from the aircraft, and therefore required "con-

voys with large security forces travelling through unrestricted areas. The very presence of the convoys attracts attention and they may be vulnerable to sabotage."

The new system consists of vaults in the floor of the hardened, aircraft shelters. They are equipped with sensors and television monitors for security, and control consoles to lift the bombs into the aircraft by remote control.

Details of the weapons-storage vaults have been compiled from open sources by the British American Security Information Council - Basic - an independent analysis group. The only US base in Britain with these vaults is RAF Lakenheath, where there are 30. There are also 24 at RAF Marham. The RAF will dispose of its last free-fall bombs in 1998, and thereafter Britain's "sub-strategic" deterrent will be provided

## Black-out chaos adds to Madrid airport woes

Elizabeth Nash  
Madrid

Attendants were handwriting passengers' check-in details by "pencil" this week following a power black-out that paralysed Barajas airport, Madrid, for five hours, prompting the Transport Minister, Rafael Arias Salgado, to condemn Spain's principal airport, one of the busiest in Europe, as "like the Third World".

It was the worst of three black-outs during a week of mounting chaos that has caused spiralling delays in all flights, and cancellations in the peak pre-Christmas season. As the weekend approached, the situation worsened. Mr Salgado announced that the nearby military airbase at Torrejón would be commandeered for civilian planes.

The base, destined for Nato use when Spain becomes a full member next year, is expected

to start taking the overspill within a fortnight. Passengers will have to check in at Barajas then be bussed along 8km of choked motorway. Torrejón's runway is at right angles to that of Barajas, so flight paths will intersect.

Tuesday's black-out was caused by a fire after a workman drove an excavator's drill through a 14,000-volt high-tension cable. Back-up generators and other emergency measures failed to operate. On Thursday an Iberia plane overran the runway and stuck in the mud, causing panic when an exit door stuck.

Madrid's only airport is 65 years old, has two congested runways, and work on the third is five years overdue. Regional authorities are slowly waking up to the need for a second airport.

The state airline, Iberia, fiercely opposes a second airport, insisting a single co-ordinating point is vital for its international network. Anyone who uses Barajas regularly can testify to Iberia's clout. Flights from far cheaper private carriers are routinely bumped from their slots by Iberia.

Mr Arias Salgado blames the previous government for the chaos, saying the Socialists delayed a report on the environmental consequences of expansion for two years. Josep Borrell, the former Socialist Public Works Minister, criticised Mr Arias Salgado for his "irresponsibility and manifest inability to confront the problems of air traffic".

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## obituaries / gazette

## José Donoso

"Without literature, I could not go on living," José Donoso, the great Chilean novelist, best known in the English-speaking world for his nightmarish evocations of grotesque yet appealing human monsters, *El obscuro pájaro de la noche* (The Obscure Bird of Night, 1971), was a writer in a land better known for its poets — Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda, both Nobel prize-winners. Yet Donoso's sulphurous prose has strong poetic elements that make his more extreme visions and exhortations of modern civilisation attractive and, for sensitive souls, more bearable.

Donoso was known as the "Fifth Man" in the group of writers forever associated now with the "Latin American Boom" of the 1950s and 1960s — García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes and Vargas Llosa. In 1972, he wrote an essay on the movement, *Historia personal del "Boom"*.

He performed the remarkable balancing trick of remaining on friendly terms with his fellow boomers, of widely differing and often changeable political and literary affiliations, but his favourite among them was always Cortázar, the Argentinian novelist whose fantasy was, like his own, blessed with the redeeming grace of po-

etry. His wife, María del Pilar Serrano, has written the best account of this boom in "magic realism", *Los de entonces* ("As They Were Then"), in which her husband appears as a dedicated *cortazariano*. As a human being, Donoso was by far the most attractive and generous of the group, and it was this inborn spirit of generosity, so rare among writers, that contributes to the greatness of his style, and makes of him the greatest contemporary South American author.

He was born in Santiago de Chile, in a land which has strong links with Britain and British culture. His family was middle-class, with artistic and literary tastes. His father, whose other passions were horses and cards, loved literature, and introduced him at an early age to Russian and French writers, but also to the English classics, and young José's favourite writer was George Eliot, in particular *Middlemarch*, one of the wisest novels in the English language.

He was educated at an English-orientated institution, the Grange School in Santiago, where he composed his first stories in English. Then he was an unwilling student at the Instituto Pedagógico at the University of Chile, before moving on to more fruitful studies at Prince-

ton, where he took a BA degree in English Literature.

Donoso's life was one of wanderings. Before going to the university, he had worked as a shepherd in Patagonia. Then he lived for a while in Buenos Aires. He obtained a Doherty Foundation scholarship to attend Princeton, then worked as a teacher and journalist in Chile, and won the Chile-Italia Prize for Journalism for his work on the *Revista Erolia* in Santiago in 1960. Meanwhile, he had in 1955 brought out at his own expense a volume of short stories, *Verano* ("Summer Holiday"). But, in 1957, his novel *Coronación* was bought by a publisher and became a great success, one of the most important of transatlantic works, which won the Premio Municipal. It was followed by another collection of short stories, *El charleston*, in 1960. *Coronación*, which attacked the Chilean ruling classes, was translated into several languages, and was awarded the William Faulkner Foundation Prize in 1962. Faulkner had inevitably become another of his most admired authors, as indeed he had for many modern Latin American writers.

A similar revolutionary attitude towards established authority in the government and

the Roman Catholic Church was evident in the 1967 novel *Este domingo* ("This Sunday"). In the same year, *El lugar sin límites* ("The Place Without Limits") further intensified his feelings for the horrors of contemporary life, charted with cool, acid precision and a bitter humour, though always made palatable by the extraordinarily beautiful style of poetic magical realism that made grotesque transvestite absurdities believable.

Donoso used to say that his books were not just nightmares, they were his real daily life. The title sends us back to Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*: Hell hath no limits nor is circumscribed in one self-place; for where we are is hell. And where hell is, we must ever be...

This is a theme Donoso was also to find in TS. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*:

Hell is oneself. Hell is alone, the other figures in it merely projections. There is nothing to escape from. And nothing to escape to. One is always alone...

Thus Donoso shows the popular existentialist view of hell as "other people" as something very superficial and insipid. It was made into a magnificent film by the great Mexican director Arturo Ripstein (1977) which enjoyed international acclaim. Of all Donoso's work, this is my favourite, even greater than his generally accepted greatest masterpiece, *The Obscure Bird of Night*.

Its portraits of social decadence are conceived in a way that reminds one of Francis Bacon's monstrous canvases of delirious, corpse-like figures on longer human, and animated only by their distorted clothing or tortured limbs. This astral vision of our lives has a putrescent glow, and performs what is perhaps the most important task of literature — to unsettle and disturb, to shatter complacencies. *Casa de campo* ("Country House", 1978) is an allegory of the decline and fall of a certain ruling class in Chile, set in the 19th century, a virtuoso distancing from the Pinochet regime.

With the publication of writings like these, it was a foregone conclusion that José Donoso would one day have to go into "voluntary exile". The other kind, "interior exile" or self-exile, was not for him. So he became one of the many fortunate writers invited to teach at the University of Iowa's Creative Writing Workshops in the mid-Sixties, after staying for a while at his friend Carlos Fuentes' house in Mexico, waiting for a visa to enter the United States.

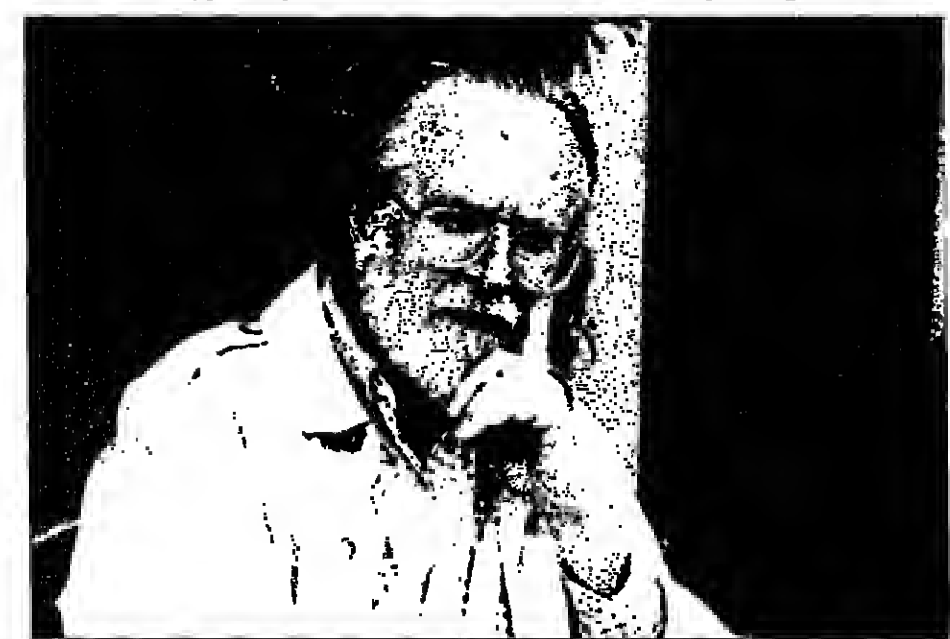
He said he had left Chile for only a few months, but those few months became 18 years of not altogether comfortable expatriate life in Spain, tellingly sketched in *El jardín de la lada* ("The Next Door Garden") in 1981, which begins with a call from a Spanish friend asking where he and his wife are planning to spend the summer — a question fraught with bitter irony for those who cannot afford to abandon "the hell of Sitges" for cooler climes.

Donoso's return to Chile is described in the same disabused comic tones in *La Desesperanza* ("Desperation", 1985) — a return to Chile still under dictatorial rule. There he wrote his last big work, *Donde van a morir los elefantes* ("Where the Elephants Go to Die") in 1994, a huge novel of 600 pages on which he had worked non-stop for 15 hours a day. He had long known he was mortally ill, and in his typically deadpan comic manner would declare: "I have cast-iron ill-health." His *Conjeturas sobre la memoria de mi tribu* ("Conjectures about the Memory of my Tribe") was published in Spain in October.

José Donoso worked to the very last. He had completed a new novel, *El Mochó*, and had started on the script of a Mexican soap opera for television which entertained him in his last days. We might now almost reverse his own saying, and with his death declare: "Literature can not go on living without him."

James Kirkup

José Donoso, writer, born Santiago de Chile 5 October 1924; married María del Pilar Serrano (one daughter); died Santiago 7 December 1996.



Donoso: a generosity that makes him the greatest contemporary South American author. Photograph: Rex

## John Duffey

For nearly 40 years the distinctive playing and singing of John Duffey has been one of the glories of contemporary bluesgrass music. His work with the Country Gentlemen and then the Seldom Scene has helped not only to shape its development, but has ensured that it remains as relevant a musical form today as it was when pioneered by Bill Monroe back in the Thirties and Forties.

Bluesgrass developed out of the string band tradition prevalent in the rural South in the early years of the century and is characterised by driving rhythms, light virtuoso playing and "high lonesome" vocals. Monroe, as the genre's "father", saw his music as a pure form with clearly defined boundaries, but found that many of his followers were to adopt a more eclectic approach. Duffey was among them.

A native of Washington DC, Duffey came to prominence as a member of the Country Gentlemen. The quartet of Duffey,

Charlie Waller as lead vocalist and flat top guitarist, Jim Cox as banjo player and Eddie Adcock as mandolinist made their stage debut on Independence Day 1957. They looked beyond the standard bluesgrass repertoire, incorporating not only vintage hillbilly melodies, but also straight country, folk-rock and even jazz numbers into their act.

For a decade the Gentlemen performed on a twice-weekly basis at the famous Shamrock Club, Georgetown and proved a vital catalyst to the burgeoning DC bluesgrass scene. Regular television appearances and a series of acclaimed albums brought them to national attention; their long-playing records include four volumes for Folkways — *Country Songs Old and New*, *Folk Songs and Bluesgrass*, *On the Road and Going Back to the Blue Ridge Mountains*; a pair of fine albums for Saturday — *Bluesgrass and Country Gentlemen*; and a live set for Zap.

In 1971 Duffey and the bass

player Tom Gray left the group to form another, the Seldom Scene. They were joined by the banjoist Ben Eldridge and the dobro wizard Mike Auldridge, both of whom had performed with Cliff Waldron's New Shades of Grass, and by the vocalist/guitarist John Starling. Their name derived from the fact that none made a living solely by performing: Duffey repaired musical instruments, Gray was a cartographer with the National Geographic Society and Starling had trained as an army surgeon. By playing only weekly at the Red Fox pizza parlour, Bethesda, Maryland, they were thus "seldom seen".

As they began to record for the DC-based Rebel label, the Scene played also on the theatrical connotation of their name, entitling their first four albums *Act 1*, *Act 2*, *Act 3* and *Act 4*. Although their eclectic approach continued to offend some bluesgrass fans, the Scene's playing could rarely be faulted

and in Starling they had one of the genre's premier vocalists.

Usually for a bluesgrass band, the Seldom Scene's lineup has remained relatively stable, and when the band celebrated its 20th anniversary with a live set, "Scene 20", for Sugar Hill in 1992, the eight individuals who had been or were members all participated. The closeness and rapport fostered by their long association is evident throughout for here, as on each of their albums, is a group who clearly and genuinely enjoyed what they were doing.

In 1995 and fronted by Moondell Klein, they played the European Bluesgrass and Cajun Festival at Blackburn, a gig billed as their last. This year, however, saw the release of a new album, *Dream Scene*, on which Duffey and Eldridge are joined by the ex-Johnson Mountain Boy Dudley Connell, the bassist Ronnie Simpkins and the dobro player Fred Travers; none on which spot-on



Duffey: "seldom seen"

harmonies and tasteful picking are, as ever, to the fore. Nineteen ninety-six marks the Seldom Scene's 25th anniversary and John Duffey has been a constant presence throughout. Whether it can survive without him remains to be seen.

Paul Wadey

John Duffey, bluesgrass singer and mandolin player, born Washington DC 4 March 1934; died Arlington, Virginia 10 December 1996.

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## DEATHS

IN SMELL, Bradford Robert Beaumont Thompson, DSC, 3rd Royal Horse Artillery, on 11 December, peacefully in his 94th year. Husband of the late Betty. Funeral and service of thanksgiving at St Etheldreda's Church, Haverhill, near Bury, St Edmunds, at 12 noon on Thursday, 15 December. Flowers to the family, please. (Mrs. Thompson, 11, The Grange, Haverhill, Suffolk, AL11 1JH, telephone 01779 201112, 12-hour answering machine 01779 201122, or faxed on 01779 201122, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER funeral arrangements (indicates funeral), forthcoming marriages, marriages may be submitted in writing (see faxed) and be charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. This should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

## Royal College of Art

Mr Lin Hsiao Dawson has been appointed Professor and Chairman of the Council of the Royal College of Art.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of York, a descendant of King George VI, will marry the Princess Alexandra, daughter of King George VI, on 14 December at Westminster Abbey. The ceremony will be performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The bride is the daughter of the Duke of York and the Princess Alexandra. The groom is the Duke of York. The wedding will be a private ceremony. The Duke of York is the second son of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. The Princess Alexandra is the daughter of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The wedding will be a private ceremony. The Duke of York is the second son of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. The Princess Alexandra is the daughter of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The wedding will be a private ceremony.

## Marriages

Mr P. C. Perrone and Mrs R. C. Stasunt. The marriage took place on Friday 13 December, at Woolwich Register Office, London SE18, between Pierre, son of Mr and Mrs Perrone, of Marseilles, France, and Francine, daughter of Mr and Mrs Mallette, of Ottawa, Canada.

## Birthdays

TODAY: Captain the Hon Sir Nicholas Beaumont, Director, High Court, 67, Mr Vivian Beldall MP, 58; Professor Richard Case, 69; General Sir Desmond Fitzpatrick, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 84; The Right Rev John Grindrod, former Archbishop of Brisbane, 77; Sir Anthony Kershaw, former MP, 51; Miss Barbara Leigh-Hunt, actress, 61; Mr Thomas McAvoy MP, 53; Sir Malcolm McLaren, Chief of Defence Procurement, Ministry of Defence, 51; Mr Charles Morris, former MP and government minister, 78; Mr Albert Morris, painter, 74; Sir John Osborn, former MP, 74; Dame Ruth Ruffin, founder of the National Youth Orchestra, 81; Miss Janette Scott, actress, 58; Mr Simon Smith, 59; Mr Roy Thomas MP, 52; Sir Simon Townley, Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire, 75; Miss Rosalyn Turek, conductor, lecturer and writer, 82.

TOMORROW: Mr David Abell, chairman and chief executive, Suter London, 59; Mr Roy Anderson, chairman of the Lockheed Corporation, 76; Mr Michael Bogdanov, artistic director, English Shakespeare Company, 58; Professor Stuart Cheekley, psychiatrist, 58; Mr Dave Clark, drummer and pop group founder, 54; Lord Croom, former chairman, Guinness Peat group, 79;

Mr Geoffrey Davies, actor, 55; Sir Graham Dorey, Bailiff of Guernsey, and a Judge of the Court of Appeal of Jersey, 64; Air Marshal Sir John Fitzpatrick, 67; Miss Ida Headed, 41; 72; Mr Gunter Hagelof, Swedish diplomat, 92; Sir Henry Hardman, former senior civil servant, 91; Mr Oliver Heald MP, Under-Secretary for Social Security, 42; Mr Kevin Hughes MP, 44; Mr Joe Jordan, footballer, 45; General Sir Frank Kitson, former Commander-in-Chief, UK Land Forces, 70; The Rev Dr Una Kroll, Deacon of the Church in Wales, 71; Mr David McMurtry, Headmaster, Oundle School, 59; Mr Oscar Niemeyer, architect, 89; Miss Edna O'Brien, novelist, 64; Mr Michael Pearl, ambassador to Fiji and British High Commissioner to Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu, 53; Mr Brian Raper, Vice-Chancellor, University of North London, 47; Mr Austin Savage, Welsh hockey international, 55; Commandant Anne Spencer, former director, Women's Royal Naval Service, 58; Professor Sir John Meurig Thomas, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, 64; Professor Maurice Watkins, biophysicist, 80.

## Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: Nostradamus (Moulin de Nostradamus) astrologer and prophet, 1503; Tycho Brahe, astronomer and mathematician, 1546; George VI King, 1895; Paul Eluard (Eugene Grindel), poet, 1895. Deaths: Thomas Rymer, archaeologist, 1713; George Washington, first US president, 1799; John Claudius Loudon, botanical writer, 1835; Albert, Prince Consort, 1861; Maurice Baring, novelist, playwright and poet, 1945; Stanley, first Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, statesman, 1947; Sir Stanley Spencer, painter, 1959; Andrei Dmitriyevich Sakharov, scientist, 1989. On this day Max Planck put forward his quantum theory, 1901;

Germany put her first U-boat into service, 1906; Rolf Amundsen reached the South Pole, 1911; Crete was formally annexed to Greece, 1913; women in Britain voted for the first time at the General Election, 1918; Archbishop Makarios became the first president of the Republic of Cyprus, 1960. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Fingar or Gwinnear and Phiala, St John of the Cross, St Nicetas of Rheims, St Spiridon and St Venantius Fortunatus.

TOMORROW: Births: Charles Conen Charles, Shakespearean scholar, 1787; Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, engineer, 1832; Jean Paul Getty, multi-millionaire, 1892. Deaths: Jan Vermeer (Jan van der Meer van Delft), painter, 1675; Isaac Walton, author of *The Compleat Angler*, 1683; Thomas Wright "Fats" Waller, jazz pianist, 1943; Walter Elias Disney, cartoonist and creator of "Mickey Mouse", 1966. On this day the Battle of Verdun ended, with 700,000 dead in Germany, 364,000 Allied soldiers, 1916; the premiere of the film *Gone With the Wind* took place, 1939; in Israel, Adolf Eichmann was found guilty of crimes against the Jewish people, 1961; John Paul Getty III was released by kidnappers who had cut off his ear, 1973. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Mary of Rome, St Nino, St Paul of Latis and St Valerian.

## Lectures

TODAY: National Gallery: James Heard, "Christmas (ii): Brueghel, The Adoration of the Kings", 12pm. National Portrait Gallery: David Mellor, "Private Eye Times, Satire Lampoon and Caricature: the visual arts of Private Eye in context", 3pm.

TOMORROW: National Portrait Gallery: Paul Webb, "J.M. Barrie", 3pm.



Communist heroine: Vaillant-Couturier photographed by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Photograph: Magnum

## Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier

Like many of the Communist personalities who joined the Party before the Second World War, Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier came from a well-established bourgeois family, her father Lucien Vogel being the owner of a weekly magazine and a well-known editor and journalist. She herself worked as a journalist and a photographer, joining the party through her membership of the Communist youth movement.

From 1934, she was one of the founders and leaders of L'Union des Jeunes Filles de France, an organisation devoted to young women. The Popular Front government of Léon Blum, which was supported by the Communists, looked favourably on some of the women's claims, appointing women to junior posts in the government, although it was very far from filling all the aspirations of Marie-Claude Vogel, who by 1937 had married Paul Vaillant-Couturier (just two weeks before his death).

In the spring of 1939 she was forced to go underground when the government made the Communist Party illegal because it was not supporting the war against Hitler. Marie-Claude took part in the writing and circulating of mainly pacifist literature. This continued after the armistice into the controversial period when certain members of the Party negotiated with the Germans in order to have the right to continue publication of their official papers. From this clan-

destiny to the clandestinity of the Resistance was an easy step. Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier joined other women leaders, such as Danièle Casanova, in a cell which organised anti-German propaganda. She was arrested by the French police in February 1942 and taken to the port of Roumainville. From there, in January 1943, she was transferred to Auschwitz.

In Auschwitz, and in Ravensbrück where she was transferred in August 1944, she distinguished herself, becoming one of the leaders and defenders of the women who were imprisoned. Liberated by the Soviet army, she continued her humanitarian work amongst the survivors and was proud to be amongst the last of the ex-prisoners who returned to liberated France only in June 1945.

From this period onwards she was, as a heroine, and as a leader, one of the most famous members of the Party. She became a member of the Central Committee and was regularly re-elected until 1982. She was a Communist deputy in the Consultative Assembly, and was continuously elected as deputy for the Seine, until November 1958, and then 1962-73. She gave evidence at the Nuremberg trials, was vice-president of L'Union de Femmes Françaises and vice-president of the International Democratic Federation of Women.

She was also famous for her two marriages. The first was to Paul Vaillant-Couturier, the

son of wealthy Protestant parents, who was remarkably gifted as a poet, journalist and orator. His experience in the 1914 war had turned him towards pacifism and Communism, and at the time of the Popular Front he became editor of *L'Humanité*. He was a determined supporter of Stalin and one of the first to publicise the activities of Ho Chi Minh. Her second husband, Pierre Villon (whose real name was Roger Salomon Giesberger), the son of a rabbi, was said to have been a Soviet agent from 1929 onwards. He subsequently became the personal assistant to Jacques Duclos. He was prominent in the resistance and at one point jumped through a closed window in order to escape from the Gestapo. He remained faithful to Stalin and in his memory he died in 1980.

Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier, loyal to two such committed husbands, was discreet. She remained devoted to the party. When she resigned her party seat in 1973 it was in order to give way to Georges Marchais. She received the Légion d'Honneur and other decorations for her service during the war.

Douglas Johnson

Marie-Claude Vogel, wartime resistance leader and politician; born Paris 5 November 1912; married 1937 Paul Vaillant-Couturier (died 1937); Pierre Villon (died 1980); died 11 December 1996.

## The poor and wretched show us Christ

## faith &amp; reason

Brendan Walsh, Director of Communications at Cafod, the Catholic relief agency, writes this week about the forgotten African women who are dying of Aids in their millions.

wrong place to look for a solution to the Aids epidemic. But the churches, too, reached for familiar remedies when the first cases were diagnosed. Some voices gleefully suggested that Aids was a punishment sent by God, but church leaders — if often embarrassed by the social hinterland of HIV/Aids — called gamely for a compassionate and non-judgemental response.

In several countries in Africa the churches provide many of the social services and more than half of the health service infrastructure. Many have taken up the challenge with generosity and courage. All over the Third World, they have set up education and prevention programmes with young people, street children, women's groups, sex workers, truck drivers, orphans, parish groups and prisoners.

But something more significant has happened than a decently generous and passably efficient response to a major health emergency. In the Church's prayerful responses to HIV/Aids, even in its official teaching, there has been an

interesting change of language and style. One of the most treasured traits of the followers of Christ is to put people into two categories: those who receive compassion — the sick, the poor, the unclean — and those who enjoy the delicious satisfaction of bestowing it: the healthy, the righteous, the pure. But it is precisely this spirit of judgement and self-satisfaction that Jesus — to the astonishment of his disciples — came to destroy.

One or two other pennies have dropped, too. Globalisation is the fancy new word for the increasing interconnection of the world. Intra-continental levers and hidden pulleys link what the poor family in Kenya or Brazil is able to afford for breakfast to the brand of coffee a shopper in Huddersfield selects from a supermarket shelf. Rich and poor are two more categories that cannot be neatly separated. The rapid spread of Aids/HIV amongst the poorest peoples of the world cannot be unpicked from the way we live in the developed world, the decisions we take here. An alert compassion is nudged towards solidarity and a demand for social justice and human rights.

In this time of Aids, many Christians have experienced something of the same shift in understanding described by the Irish missionary sister who nursed Theophista on her death bed: "When I went to Uganda I had all these ideas about witnessing to the gospel with my life," Ursula Sharpe recalled. "But when I got involved with people who had Aids I found that they were the ones who were challenging me, instead of me challenging them. They still challenge me. They shake my faith so much that it has been rocked to its roots."





The re-creation of Christmas past. The Great Hall at Sulgrave Manor, Banbury, Oxford is decked out in mock Tudor. Photograph by John Voos. Nikon FM2, 20mm lens, 1/15 sec at F2.8, ASA 800 multi-speed film



# the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER 1996

It's surprising how even the most sophisticated of us adhere to the idea of a traditional Christmas. We may shop in Tesco and buy technological gewgaws but the lure of cosy firesides and tables groaning with Dickensian fare, however unreal, is irresistible. Inside we discover that we still decorate trees – whatever the expense – and play games, even if they bear little resemblance to those played in pre-TV days. And children still flock to Santa's grotto. The traditions are preserved – as long as they remain commercially viable.

## interview



### John Walsh meets... Imelda Staunton

She plays the sexy high-kicker from the Hot Box club. Off stage she's a Celt with angry blue eyes **page 3**

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## arts & books



### The passion, the venom, the grandeur

Robin Cook MP on a literary look at Parliament which fails to match his own vision **page 6**

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## travel



### Big seas, big winds, a pig and a pot

Harriet O'Brien finds Cornwall in winter inspiring, exhilarating and – best of all – half empty **page 9**

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## consuming



### What the tree says about our lives

The first was made by some lads at an office party in Latvia in 1510. It has been changing ever since **page 15**

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**If your boss has given you Christmas day off...**

Pop the cork! Release the Cava! You will find Cava is just made for celebrations, and the more spontaneous the better. For one thing, you can rely on its natural sparkle and super quality. For another, it's incredible value for money.

Cava is the sparkling wine from Spain that is made by the traditional method. It comes from a land of rolling hills and valleys near Barcelona, where there's plenty of sunshine and moderate rainfall. The perfect place for vineyards.

As well as being light, delicate and fragrant, Cava wines have a distinctive smoothness and crisp dryness. It takes many months of careful handling to develop these qualities. No wonder Cava's so keen to get in the glass when you open it!



CASTELLBLANCH - CONDE DE CARALT - FREIXENET - SEGURA VIUDAS



# In pursuit of fun and frolics

Chris Maslanka picks his 12 games of Christmas

There is one golden rule for playing games at Christmas - don't add to any potential stress by choosing the wrong sort of game. Match the players to the game. Here are 12 of the best.

The simple and soothing jigsaw (p8) despite its vulnerability to the vacuum cleaner and association with the sick room, is still very much with us. The *Agatha Christie Death on the Nile Mystery Jigsaw* (Paul Lamond, 750 pieces, age 12-adult, £8.99) attempts to marry the jigsaw off with the crime novel. Which clues lead Hercule Poirot to see through the alibi? As with an Agatha Christie proper, I suspect people will find arriving at the solution more satisfying than the solution itself. For the Captain Hastings of this world the solution is in the booklet but, as befits the mystery, in mirror writing.

The *Enid Blyton Sea Adventure Mystery Jigsaw* is similar but for children (Paul Lamond, big pieces, 250 of them, £6.99). Interestingly, the nine-year-old testers found it frustrating without a picture to guide them.

Best catered for were the younger children with the *Elmer Giant Floor Puzzle* (Paul Lamond, 22 pieces, aged 2+, £6.99). It was three-year-old Sarah's first jigsaw and she loved the colourful and differently-patterned elephants. With only a little help she could reconstruct it herself. Keen followers of Barbie's fantastic lifestyle may appreciate one of the Barbie puzzles (Spears, 100-150 pieces, age 6+, £3.99).

Visuo-spatial matching, so important in jigsaws, is the means by which *My First Scrabble Words* (Spears, 1-4 players, age 3+, £9.99) imparts spelling. Is the child really spelling when she matches colours and shapes? No, but it doesn't matter, as the child is becoming familiar with the process of assembling letters to make words. The use of an already-developed skill (colour- and shape-matching) as a stepping stone to learning a new skill (spelling) is a sound educational and psychological principle. The puzzles can be solved by trial and error

without adult help: if it don't fit, it ain't right!

The *Oxford Game* (Falcon, 2-6 players, age 14+, £35.00) tests spelling and the meaning of words à la *Call My Bluff*. The three levels of difficulty make it possible for children to play with adults, though I doubt whether children would play this on their own. The spelling part was unpopular with my more dyslexic guests but very popular with those who confused knowing the meaning of rare words with linguistic skill. (p8)

Spears' *Don't Panic* (2-4 players, age 8+, £13.00) is a family party game with simple rules. The object is to think up items belonging to a given category while a noisy timer counts down from 10 and paralyzes your thinking. There are two levels of difficulty: hard for adults (names of liquors, famous statues) and easy for children (football teams, green things). Children can play on their own, but there can be some controversy as to whether an item belongs to a category or not, so watch out for arguments. (p8)

*Evolutions* (Spears, 2-6 players or teams, age 12+, £19.00) is another category game in which players have to identify a word, product, invention, name, superstition, nursery rhyme, custom or cliché after hearing one paragraph's-worth of clue. Engaging enough and easy to play, it comes in a small box which makes it easy to store, too. (p8)

Not to be confused with *The Oxford Game*, *Oxford Games* is a Buckinghamshire-based company producing a wide range of beautifully-designed classic and historically-based games. *Tabula* (2 players, £12.95) is an alleged forerunner of backgammon played throughout the Roman empire from the beginning of the 1st century. It was said that the Emperor Claudius was so addicted that he had a tabula board installed in his chariot (presumably chariot-race was not a problem in ancient Rome). (p8)

*Trivial Pursuit* in its many guises is still the king of after-dinner quizzes. The latest two



are *Trivial Pursuit Genius Edition* (M & B, age 15+, £36) and *Trivial Pursuit Annual* (1997) Edition (age 15+, £18). The use of the word "trivial" in the title is a stroke of genius. It means that if you don't know the answers, it doesn't matter. If the sad character who knows all the answers (cos he's played it on his own many times) annoys you, remind him not to confuse facts with knowledge - it's only a game! (p8)

*True or False* (M & B, 2-6 players, no age guide, £24) is a variant of the trivial pursuit-type quizzes. You have a 50:50 chance of getting it right so there's less chance to show off and more chance to revel in the fascinating facts

and check your gullibility, eg Crying was considered manly or tough in the Middle Ages - true or false? Answer: true - eat your heart out Paul Gascoigne! (p8)

One of the encouraging aspects of the Nineties has been the rise of the pub quiz. Paul Lamond's *Burns and Porter - Pub Trivia Quiz* (2-20 players, age 18+, £6.99) contains a good selection - 20 sets of 20 questions, e.g. Which Avenger shook the coffee beans for Nescafé in 1987? (Gareth Hunt). (p8)

Of more questionable benefit was the emergence of the national lottery and scratch-card fever. Those who played *Lottery* last year and who like popular music will

no doubt become addicted to Paul Lamond's *Music Scratch-Card Trivia* (no age specified) where the answers are revealed by scratching the card. (p8)

*Reminiscing 1960s-1990s* (Paul Lamond, 2-4 players, age 12+, £16.99) is an after-dinner game with simple rules and good questions. It gives you the opportunity to pretend you're younger than you are or to bond with others through shared memories. The game reminds me of a designer version of the psychological therapies used to consolidate pockets of lucidity in dementia sufferers. So perhaps it also offers you an opportunity to check that none of your marbles is missing. (p8)

If your marbles are indeed absent, *Wacky Washer* (Spears, 2-4 players, age 4+, £16) may be your thing. The object of this dice game is to pop all your replica foam clothes (socks, T-shirts, trousers) into a washing machine before they get spun out again. The children loved it. I look forward to an adult version using real clothes and a spin dryer - a cross between roulette and strip poker. To avoid tears on Christmas morning, note that batteries are not included. (p8)

*Atmosfear - The Soul Rangers* (Spears, 3-6 players, age 12-adult, £18.00) is more sinister than wacky. You'll need a video and TV (which doesn't come with the box) and also the board from the

original *Harbingers* game, to which this is an add-on. Little horrors will love it. (p8)

By contrast, *Enchanted Forest* (Ravensburger, 2-6 players, age 6+, £9.99) is a quiet, thoughtful game children can play with adults or alone. The artwork is attractive and the instructions easy to follow. You have to travel through the forest finding three treasures. Girls may enjoy this more than boys - it's fairy-tale stuff. (p8)

Adult fantasies are made of sterner stuff, as the award-winning *Power* demonstrates (Spears, 2-4 players, age 10+, £27). You'll deserve an award too if you can understand the rules after Christmas pudding. It's a war game requiring cool planning and strategy (so don't drink before playing). The girls I played it with couldn't get into it - they couldn't understand why we weren't sharing our armies so everyone could win. (p8)

If you're a bit of a nambypamby like me and you'd rather get on with people than grab their flags, you may enjoy *Compatibility* (Spears, 3-6 players, age 12+, £20) where you check the overlap between your associations and those of your partner (you know, like table-chair; windscreen-wiper). (p8)

If war games, social bonding, shared lunacy or reminiscing leave you cold and you have a compatibility problem, you may wish to retire to a neutral corner and indulge in a solitary pursuit. I recommend the beautifully-made *Lagoon puzzles*, such as *Soma Cube* (£16). It comprises seven improbable and aesthetically appealing pieces which assemble to make a cube and 17 other shapes, rather like a 3-D tangram, or *Grand Master* (£14) a tile-sliding puzzle. (p8) With any luck, by the time you've mastered these two puzzles, the 12 days of Christmas will be long gone.

**KEY:**  
p = quiet; f = noisy;  
d = disturb the neighbours  
\* = almost irritatingly offensive;  
s = handle with care  
s/s = have a Relate counsellor handy.

## Games People Play...

No 2. Richard Chivers, 50, barrister (whose name we have had to change, for fear of embarrassing his colleagues in chambers)

Did I tell you what happened to me in Northern Ireland the other day? A client of mine said: "Richard, I understand you enjoy shooting." My entry in *Who's Who*, I think, which is fictional. "Shooting?" - "Aye, wi' a gun." Shooting isn't really games is it?

Diplomacy, how about that? It's a bit boring, I suppose. Each person starts off with a country in 1914. Every move is made at the same time as everyone else, so there's no hanging about waiting to go. To be successful you have to have backing or you're let down, so you make alliances with people. Then you have to judge carefully when to ditch your friend, because once you've done that, you're not trustworthy.

There's a lot less luck than usual, actually I don't think there's any luck at all, it just depends how much support you get. In the end the aim is to conquer the world, so you've got to let your allies down, but you don't want to do it too soon. Generally Russia seems to win.

I haven't played it since I was at Cambridge. I used to play with my friend Johnny and his then wife. His wife made Bombay Duck. She didn't realise you have to deep fry it. Have you eaten raw duck? It rather ruins your concentration. I haven't played Diplomacy since.

It's the same as the horse game really. If you're driving along and you see a horse and claim it, you get a point. If you wrongly claim a horse because it's a cow, you lose a point, and whoever spotted your mistake gets a point. But if they're wrong, you can get two points by claiming a mistaken mistake. It doesn't sound much fun, does it?

*Diplomacy*, from Gibsons Games, costs £17.99. A Deluxe edition is available only in the United States. Bombay Duck is a type of fish.

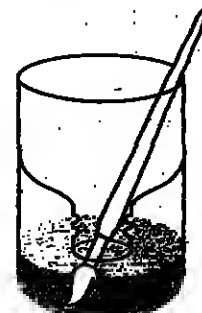
Pandora Melly

## Don't junk it ... use it!

Nasty, messy things children. They spill drinks and knock over grimy bowls of water that they are using to rinse their paint-brushes. Here's a child-proof, spill-proof way around the problem.



1 Take plastic bottle emptied on the previous occasion that messy child spilt its drink. Cut off top just above the half-way mark.



2 Invert severed top into bottom half. Push down firmly to create good seal (glue if you feel particularly insecure). You now have a simple, spill-proof container, which will hold its contents (if not over-filled) even if knocked over entirely.

For added amusement, watch child trying to drink from it without a straw.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranough

## Whatever happened to: conspicuous consumption?



The year: 1981 - Geoffrey Howe deflates (what a horrible prospect) and sets in train the agenda for the 80s, culminating in Nigel Lawson's budget of 1987. A consumer's paradise: low taxation, high credit.

The effects: Huge shopping malls appear on our streets, justified by \$1m Christmas bonuses from Goldman Sachs. Also Filofaxes, braces, Porsche's, champagne, big advertising budgets, big dresses (with pads), finding yourself (amidst the pads) and saying things like 'I need to revise certain aspects of my personality'.

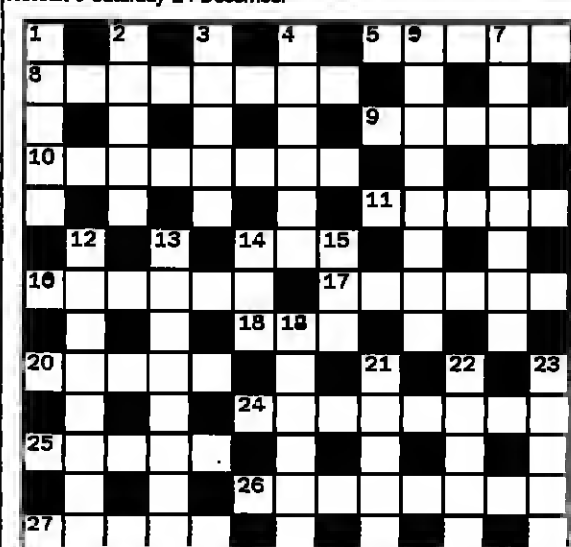
What next? The economy huts - big time. Lamont's budget of 1992 recognises that all is not well, with thousands stuck in a negative equity trap, record unemployment and a balance of payments deficit of unimaginable, unmanageable proportions. Investment, or even saving becomes the norm. Some even seem embarrassed by money. They close their accounts at the local sun-dried tomato store. In Margaret Thatcher's words a "new liverish left wing Puritanism" takes over, condemning the eighties. Greed is good becomes green is good.

The here and now Britain's dire exit from the ERM becomes a policy to secure maximum economic growth. The phrase "what's wrong with wanting to have a Porsche in the drive and a few bottles of bubbly after work?" returns to common currency, as heard in a city bar last week, and this week Harrods sell 30 hampers at £1,000 each to a single buyer. So are the 80s back? Something might have a braking effect on the economy and prevent this. Venturing to the shops one might trip over that other aspect of conspicuous consumption: the people lying in their doorways.

James Auerast

## concise crossword

No.3170 Saturday 14 December



- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>                              | <b>DOWN</b>                        |
| 5 Defensive ditches (5)                    | 1 Attempt written composition? (5) |
| 8 Shafts of light (8)                      | 2 Trap (5)                         |
| 9 Pastoral poem (5)                        | 3 Gusto (5)                        |
| 10 Antbear (8)                             | 4 Come out (6)                     |
| 11 Church members other than ministers (5) | 6 People of experience (3,5)       |
| 14 Stretch of salt water (3)               | 7 Revealing (4-4)                  |
| 16 Work by More (6)                        | 12 Male horse (8)                  |
| 17 Walk like duck (6)                      | 13 Letters (8)                     |
| 18 Chum (3)                                | 14 Plant juice (3)                 |
| 20 Group of pupils (5)                     | 15 Boring instrument (3)           |
| 24 Sporty (8)                              | 19 Shrewd (6)                      |
| 25 House adjacent to Aston? (5)            | 21 Timepiece (5)                   |
| 26 Martinet (8)                            | 22 Not fresh (5)                   |
| 27 Grind teeth (5)                         | 23 Yellow pigment (5)              |

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Checker, 5 Count (Cheque account), 8 Linc, 9 Pretend, 10 Chocolate, 12 Run, 13 Tip-off, 14 Brahms, 17 Woe, 18 Many-sided, 20 Assault, 21 Opera, 23 Horse, 24 Dresden, DOWN: 1 Colic, 2 Ell, 3 Tip-off, 4 Repeat, 5 Crie, 6 Unearthed, 7 Tidings, 11 Oppressor, 15 Towpath, 15 Restore, 16 United, 18 Maure, 19 Drain, 22 End.

## Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South	
North	South
♠ J 10 6 2	♠ 9 4
♥ 5 4 2	♥ A 9 6
♦ 7 5 4	♦ A 9 8 3
♣ 8 7 5	♣ J 9 6 2
West	East
♠ A Q 8 5	♠ 9 4
♥ 10 7	♥ A 9 6
♦ K 10 6 2	♦ A 9 8 3
♣ K 10 3	♣ J 9 6 2
South	North
♠ K 7 3	♠ K Q J 8 3
♥ K Q J 8 3	♥ Q J
♦ Q J	♦ A K 4
♣ A K 4	♣ A K 4

Declarer spotted his own mistake on this deal. Unfortunately he saw it about six tricks too late. There was only one simple point in the play and, when you have got it right, you will have done better than a distinguished international who, to be fair, was enjoying a bad day. The auction could not be described as dramatic. South opened One Heart and neither West nor East felt prepared to take action. West led ♠ 2 and it all looked straightforward to

declarer. It seemed very likely that his opponents' silence was due to their holding balanced hands. In that case, there would be four trump tricks, two clubs, and time to establish a seventh winner in spades.

The defenders continued diamonds and South ruffed the third round. There was, of course, the danger that he might run into a spade ruff but there was no alternative to playing on trumps. East took his ace and, as feared, pushed through a spade for West to take his two winners, after which East trumped the third round. This had the effect of establishing dummy's ♠ J but there was a slight hitch: Declarer had ruffed the third round of diamonds with his three! I trust that you took the precaution of trumping with your eight. Then the table can be entered on the third round of trumps with ♥ 5 and a discard taken on the winning spade. As it was, South ended with only six tricks when he lost a club at trick thirteen.

## Perplexity

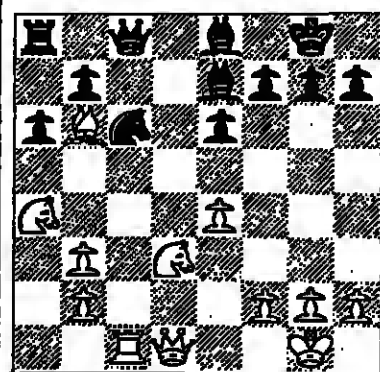
Mixed doubles: Arch line optima mists cradle men

first correct answer opened on 27 December. Entries to: Perplexity, the Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL

The six words above hide three connected one-word answers. To find them, you must group the words into three pairs, then rearrange the letters within each pair. A Chambers Dictionary prize will be awarded to the sender of the

30 November answers: elephant (inELephant Pet HAVing a Trunk); rhinoceros (hoRn on His NOse Can hE aphROdiSiac); beef (BeE danger Food). Winner: Yvonne Abbess.

## Chess William Hartston



It's Black to play in the diagram position. What would you do?

The position comes from Topalov-Karpov, played in the second round of the current Las Palmas super-tournament and provides a good illustration of why the players are finding it so hard to beat each other. Despite having level material and no clear weaknesses, Black is under some pressure. He cannot get his rook into play, and White's knights are poised to invade e5 and molest the Q-side pawns. Black would like to get his bishop to c6, but that involves moving the knight, which cannot hudge until the queen moves, and the queen has no good square. Karpov solved the problem neatly with 1...e5! Now 2.Nxe5 is met by 2...Qe6 3.Nxe6 Bxe6 when the double threat of Qxe4 or Bxe4 leaves White nothing better than 4.Nc3 Bxe4 5.Nxe4 Qxb6 when Black stands slightly better. Since 2.Nxe5 Bxe6 3.Nxe6 Nd4 is also perfectly good for Black, Topalov settled for 2.Nc3 Qe6 3.Nd5 Rc8 4.h3 Bb5 5.Qg5 Qg4 6.fxe4 Kf7 7.Nxe7 when a draw was agreed. Stopping inferior positions turning into lost ones is, after all, what true grandmasters do best of all.

TURN TO PAGE 25... for the weather, sky at night, Jasper Rees on TV, Robert Hanks on radio



TO FIND OUT WHAT'S ON, AND WHEN, TOMORROW READ TODAY'S EYE

## Travels with My Camera

Enfant terrible Keith Allen voyages around his father, as they visit his old schools and borsals - Channel 4



## Sunderland v Chelsea

Roker Park plays host to the Fulham Rd Italians as Chelsea showcase their title credentials - Sky Sports 1



## Doctor Zhivago

Hum along with the world's most famous balalaika tune as Omar Sharif and Julie Christie pursue each other across the backdrop of the Russian Revolution - BBC2



## An Eye Full

Your comprehensive and critical guide to the week's arts, entertainment and TV. Plus, Eddie Izzard on 'Cows' and '101 Dalmatians' on the big screen



Serena Mackesy  
In my week

Santa's trade secrets revealed: 'I put my beard in rollers every night, just to keep it in trim'

Selfridges: cradle of consumerism. All your Christmas needs are here: Calvin Klein socks, bottles of perfume, dinky nibbles, candles, cherubs, paper, party dresses. Here, as in all the stores, we see the true face of Christmas: spend, spend, spend, darling.

But don't forget, it's all about the kiddies. Every child has at least one adult in tow, each adult psychotically clinging in pieties about childhood innocence and upping their Christmas spend as they make their way to the escalators.

Being a youngest child, I found out about Father Christmas early. I don't think I'd gone beyond three before I started trying to stay awake all night to catch my father rather than some old geezer from the North Pole. The moment my brother told me the truth was certainly a turning-point, but it sure as sugar wasn't the trauma the anti-Santa brigade try to claim it is. Actually, I rather liked having got one over on the grown-ups: I knew something they didn't know I knew. I've never looked back.

But then, nor has the unrelenting commercialism of Christmas. For a shop, kids mean cash: get the parents to take them there and the rest will follow. The £25,000 and 2,000 square feet devoted to the free Christmas grotto on the third floor are money well spent. Between mid-October, when it opens, and Christmas Eve, 200,000 waiting rug-rats are brought to see Santa and collect a handful of chocolate to smear over themselves. At this time of year, queues run at roughly one-and-a-half hours, rising to over two at weekends. Roughly 8,000 people pass through the yuletide portals on a Saturday, lining up in a separate room near the loos and the coke machine, squawking and waiting among the crowd-control barriers.

And essential to the spirit of the whole thing is that the grown-ups continue to fool themselves. As they reach the

top of the queue, a tinkling ring from a triangle summons them forward to see the great man. "Let's go and see Santa!" they cry. Their offspring are often too young to understand a word of what they're saying, but still they surge forward, led by assistants who help them out by saying "Hello, Father Christmas!" in bright voices as they enter.

Santa sits on a red velvet windowsill surrounded by teddy bears. "Hello," he says, "and what's your name?" "James," says a victim. "Camilla," says the next. "Louise," says another. A gang of eight little girls crowds round at once. He deals with it all smoothly, making each one say her name and her present requirements in turn. As an endless stream of other people's children skips and hops past me,

cherished fantasies of department store Santas smoking roll-ups and cussing the youth of today. Not a bit of it. This man with the big brown reindeer eyes and the rouged-up nose resolutely stays in character. "It took me many many years to grow my beard," he says. "I've lost count. I put it in rollers every night, just to keep it in trim. I put it in a hairnet when I sleep, just to look after it."

Bending to his cup, he hooks his thumb and index finger around his magnificent white mustache to avoid tugging stains. "Usually," he says, "my assistants do this for me. I had Fern Britten holding my beard the other day." Santa, you see, has been cashing in on his celebrity status, making an appearance on *Ready, Steady, Cook!*

Something's going to have to slip, I think. I try different tacks. Where do you live? "I stay here, in a room upstairs, the reindeer have a stable on the roof. It's very nice. I'm very happy here." Does he actually like children? Or did he have to train to handle them? "I love them. It's my life. I didn't train. I was born into it." I'm

starting to panic. Eventually I crack, ask a direct question. What will he be doing once Christmas is over? "Ooh," he says. "We'll take about a week off and then we start all over again. There are so many presents to get ready, you see, and then there's all the wrapping."

All human life is catered for this Christmas - there's even a seasonal treat for dustbin percussionists. This Wednesday (18 Dec) STOMP, the unfeasibly cool junk rhythm merchants, are holding open auditions for anyone with a pair of big boots and a will to drum their way round Europe next year. Anyone keen to find new uses for an oil drum should register by 9.30am at the Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon St, London W1, opposite Euston Station. Well, it'll make a change from the grape harvest.



I suddenly realise that my own childhood photos aren't so bad after all. All children, en masse, look exhausted, puffy, clumsy; the words "foetal alcohol syndrome" race through my head when I catch sight of the sixth, but then seven, eight and nine look the same. Santa treats them all as Santa should: with affection and respect. "And have you been good?" he asks. Each child stands dumbstruck. "I'm going to ask teddy," he says, and flicks a hidden switch that makes the Bruin at his shoulder nod his head. He asks the mums what they want for Christmas. "A new Volkswagen Polo," says one. "A nanny," says another.

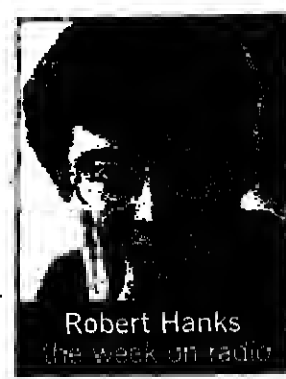
Santa and I go for a cup of tea. And that's when I realise just how far the fantasy has permeated. I've always

## Well-versed but off-beam

Like most other things in the past couple of years - comedy, football, cookery, car maintenance - poetry has enjoyed its few minutes in the sun, being touted as "the new rock 'n' roll". And while I think this comparison is probably exaggerated (for instance, when Seamus Heaney was collecting his Nobel Prize you didn't get Mick Jagger lolling on to the stage and flashing his arse at the audience), it is true that poets have had their profiles raised considerably.

At any rate, a lot more of them seem to appear on radio programmes these days. They turn up as guests on Mark Radcliffe's show on Radio 1, reciting *vers libre* and swapping witty *aperçus* with Land; or they present their own programmes - like Liz Lochhead, who's just finished a Radio 4 series on the awfulness and the shameful desirability of women's magazines (qualities so self-evident from the excerpts selected that you could have done without her commentary pounding the message home).

In particular, you get an awful lot of Simon Armitage.



Simon Armitage  
the week on radio

Now I yield to none, or to not very many, in my admiration for Armitage the poet - witty, erudite, readable, rereadable, tremendous technical facility, eclectic range of reference, etc. - but about Armitage the radio personality I have my doubts. He's at his worst on Radio 4's Saturday evening poetry slot *Stanza* (between series at the moment), where he intones his script in a barely inflected drone, sounding as if he's desperate to dissociate himself from the words he's uttering. (Andrew McAlister, who preceded him in the job, often irri-

tated the pants off me but you never doubted his enthusiasm: bring him back.)

Points of Reference (Radio 4, Wednesday) shows Armitage off to considerably better advantage, by using him as a poet rather than a poetic personality. The series explores the disparate associations that the points of the compass have for us, through an assortment of interviews linked by Armitage's verse. This week it was West: we heard people talking about the West of Britain as a holiday playground or as repository of an older, Celtic wisdom (the part of the country never conquered by the Romans); about the west wind and the soft, diffused light of the West, about West as the direction of sunset; about the West as the edge of things, the direction we head in when we die and in which young men are advised to go; and about the West's brief reign as the centre of wealth and power.

At times, this wandered off-beam - towards the end it got wrapped up in discussion of the Western as a genre primarily concerned with constructions of masculinity - but overall it was

gripping stuff. And Armitage's poetic commentary was witty, erudite, all of that stuff. Possibly his catalogues of geographical features ("Mersey, Irwell, Sefron, Wirral, Worcester, Shropshire, Cheltenham ... Cheddar Gorge, Severn Bore, M5, M4, M54") and deliberate anachronism ("Lewis and Clark playing grunge in a West Coast bar ... Pizarro laundering drug money into an off-shore bank account") seemed to place exhaustiveness above rhetorical impact. All the same, it evoked a startling succession of ideas and impressions, and Armitage sounded almost expressive at times.

Unfortunately, the experience was spoiled by catching the last edition of *Hearings* with Heggley on Radio 4 later the same evening: with John Heggley delivering nonsense about disordered dogs in an exaggerated Modern Poetic, Armitage's straight version seemed retrospectively ridiculous. It all goes to prove the truism that radio isn't just about words; and being able to do words doesn't mean you can do radio.

## The not so cute little critter

This week Mrs Bottomley had a fit of the principles and called for more stringent controls on sex and violence on television. But her initiative to woo the couch-potato electorate with a hit list of television ills made some crucial omissions. Some viewers will be feeling particularly unprotected this morning after exposure to *In the Wild: Asian Elephants* with Goldie Hawn (ITV, Fri).

There have been repeated complaints about the dangerous levels of psychobabble gratuitously injected by Hollywood stars into the natural history films they present. ITV in particular has failed to heed them. Despite claims to beed viewers that a film about tigers with Bob Hoskins left them feeling confused, nauseous and even, in one extreme case, in need of expensive psychotherapeutic readjustment, last night's documentary went out without any kind of health warning. Pressure groups are now calling for a sign advising viewers of the potential risk, to be displayed in the top right hand corner of the screen: the simple logo would depict someone in reflecting sunglasses admiring their own image in a hand mirror.

You can see the point of the celeb-fronted wildlife doc: the famous, permanently and



Goldie Hawn  
the week on television

pointlessly in the spotlight, can do something useful by hugging up and sharing it with an endangered species. Invariably, though, film stars know next to nothing about the animal in which they are hired to be interested. On the basis that some form of expertise is better than none, they feel impelled to impart a more personal form of specialist knowledge on the film. Thus they are usually to be found training hi-tech infra-red binoculars on their own navels.

Hawn's contribution to the genre, a themed tour round her famous anthology of wacky faces and kooky giggles, magnificently upped the ante. The focus of her mission was to track down an elephant she had seen several years previously. This wasn't just any old endan-

gered elephant. It was also a blind elephant, and a mother of a small calf to boot. Probably, though she forgot to mention it, a single mother. Something to really emotive home about. She spent the bulk of the journey telling us that she didn't know why she loved Indian elephants. When she finally found her answer, you guessed right if you thought it would be the last word in solipsistic self-delusion. "They take care of their families," she explained. "which is so important to me ... And they hold up their sick until they can't any more. I did that with my mother." Despicably, she loved them because they reminded her of herself.

Thank God for the conventional wildlife doc. It may bring its own cargo of clichés but at least it works hard to lay on a visual entertainment. Deceptive editing techniques, the tropical-fruit voice-over, non-appearance of star animal - they were all there in *Mountains of the Snow Leopard*, this week's *Survival* (ITV, Mon). If you judged the film by its first paragraph the way you sometimes judge books, you'd have turned off in the time it takes Goldie Hawn to say "I me myself".

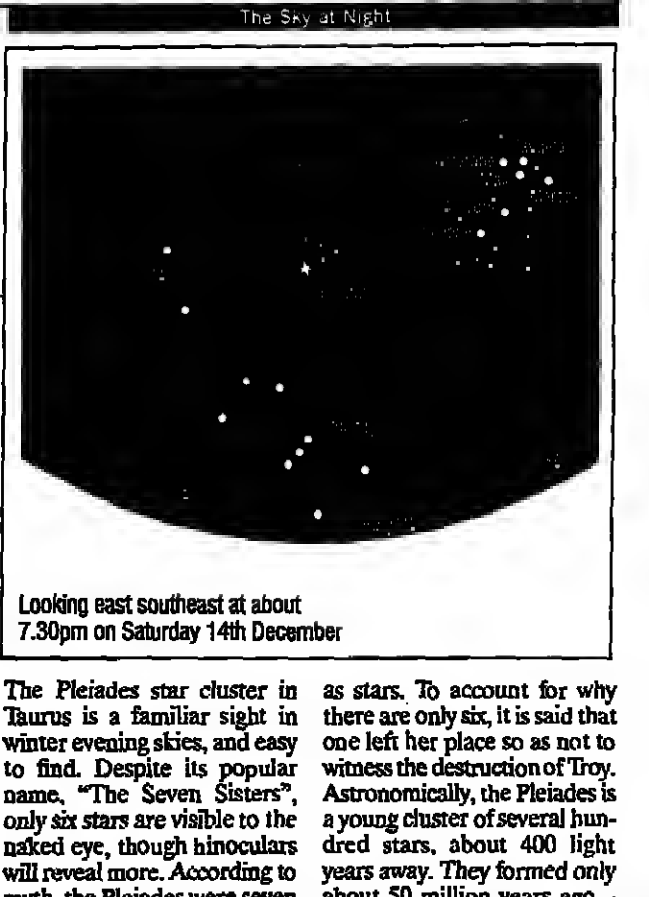
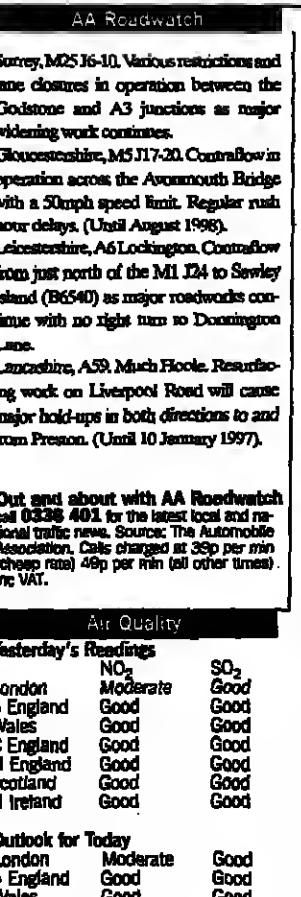
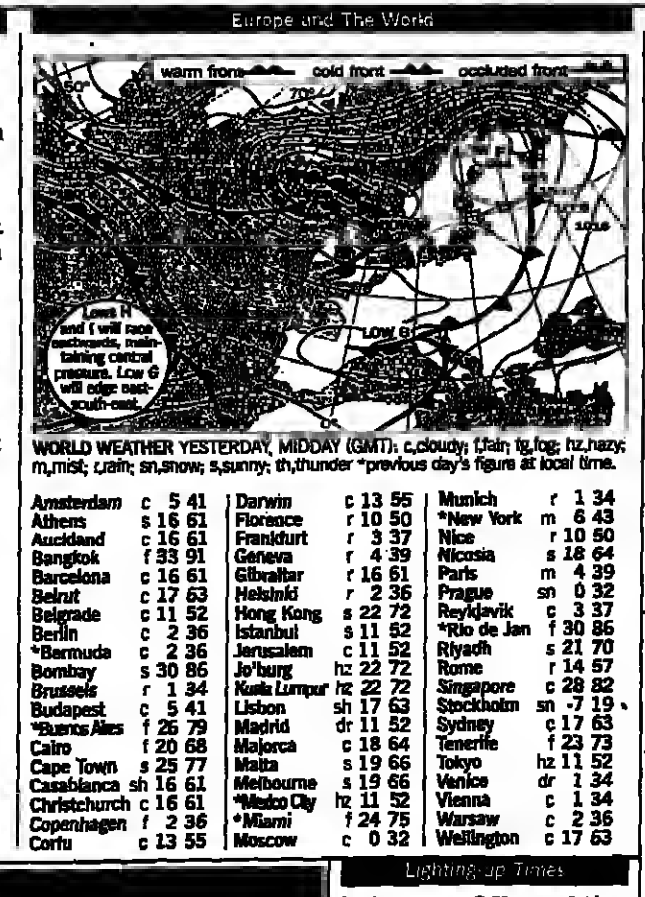
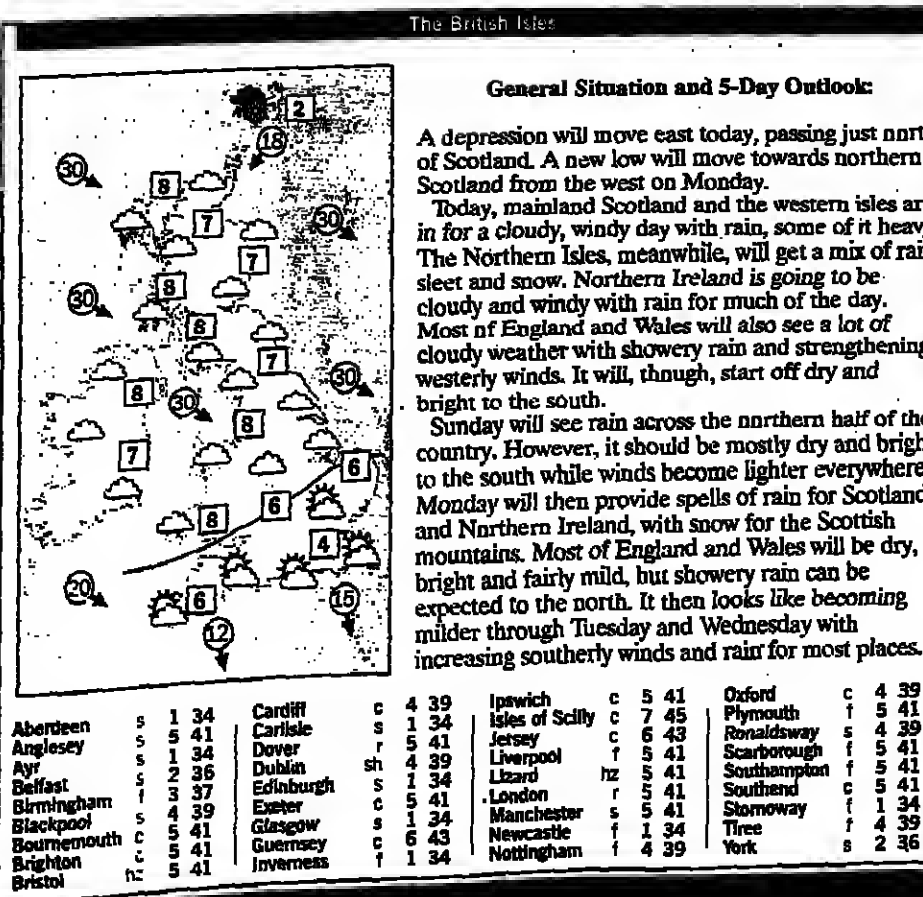
"One of the world's strange sights is camels in the snow," it intoned. "We know them as beasts of the hot places." Not in this house, we don't. We know them as hairy water porters of the Arabian dune. The snow leopard is a reclusive creature: if a celeb were hired to make a film about how much they identified with the species, it would have to be JD Salinger. Des O'Connor, meanwhile, might appropriately endorse a creature of irritating abundance: a pigeon, or something, a serial producer of harmless effluent you try your best to ignore. He was back in *Des O'Connor Tonight* (ITV, Wed), firing off questions bought second-hand from a car boot sale of old newspaper clippings. The Spice Girls came on and gamely tried to parley him up as a groovy uncle. But some figures are beyond the reach of even the most intrepid of irony-clad search-and-rescue post-modernists.

The show should come with a corner logo warning viewers of lazy, morale-sapping television, say Sky One. The only thing more cack-handed this week was *Match of the Day's* disastrous FA Cup draw (BBC2, Mon), which really will be Sky's baby one day. The BBC Cup final broadcast is an endangered species (only one left), and amount of jazzy publicity will save it now.

Understanding this, the cleverer Des had gone the way of the snow leopard.



## WEATHER



In The Independent next week

Jessica Lange: object of desire

Madonna: Perfect Evita, or is she?

London	3:51pm	8:00am	Good	Good	Good
Birmingham	3:54pm	8:12am	C England	Good	Good
Manchester	3:50pm	8:15am	Scotland	Good	Good
Newcastle	3:45pm	8:25am	N Ireland	Good	Good
Glasgow	3:43pm	8:24pm			
Nottingham	3:50pm	8:40am			

byu, the prehistoric world was a very different place. After the last dinosaurs became extinct on Earth.

Orion, they were rescued by Jupiter and placed in the sky

**Jacqueline Mitten**

High Tides			
	AM	HT	PM
London	4:00	7:1	16:29
Liverpool	1:17	9:4	13:41
Manchester	9:32	5:27	17:50
West (Alford Dunes)	8:35	7:4	20:44
Heath	2:37	3:5	14:54
Portsmouth	1:33	9:5	13:41

Sun rises 7:59am

Sun sets 3:51pm

Full Moon: December 24

Moon sets 10:36pm

Moon sets 8:48pm





## The big picture

**Notorious**  
Sat 3.05pm BBC2

On the outside, Alfred Hitchcock's greatest film of the 1940s is a spy thriller about suspected Nazis held up in post-war Brazil. At its dark heart, though, is a perverse love story in which American agent Cary Grant (above) forces Ingrid Bergman (above) the daughter of a Nazi, but a patriotic American who loves Grant) into seducing the leader of the Rio-based Germans, Claude Rains. Terrific suspense, great performances and Ingrid Bergman at her sexiest.

## Television preview

Recommended viewing this weekend

by Gerard Gilbert

The weekend before the Christmas schedules begin in earnest is the broadcasters' equivalent of finishing off the scraps - long-running series have to come to a conclusion, and nothing too dainty should be served up to outshine these left-overs. Which nutritional metaphor, as Angus Deayton might say, brings us to *An Italian Christmas* - Recipes from the River Café (Sat BBC2).

The River Café, in Hammersmith, West London - recently described by the *New Yorker* magazine as probably the best Italian restaurant in Europe - is actually more famous for the cookbook which bears its name. This bible of gastronomy (if you happen to have a wood-burning oven and access to top-quality Italian produce, that is) is an indispensable accessory in the home of any self-respecting young urban professional - even if it rests on the coffee table rather than the kitchen shelf. It may not be the sort of tome one turns to after a hard day at the office, but at Christmas it comes into its own - especially if you are looking for an alternative to the dreaded roast turkey and plum pudding. Doesn't polenta with porcini

mushrooms and white truffles, roasted loin of pork and *vin santo* ice-cream sound so much more grown-up? Keith Allen, the former *Comic Strip* comedian who proved himself a strong dramatic presence in the BBC adaptation of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, has always struck me as, what you might call, a naughty boy. And lo, it turns out he was expelled from school and was in and out of hospital. Allen's principal memory of his father (an oft-absent Royal Navy submariner) was the thought: "O goodie - dad's away and I can be naughty". This week's *Travels with My Camera* (Sun C4), in which Allen and his father, Eddie, re-visit the scenes of Allen's mispent youth, continues the circle by showing the actor - a surprisingly disciplinary parent - goading his own son into doing his homework.

*TX: Dreamgirls* (Sat BBC2) looks at the work of that dark genius of 1970s French  *Vogue*, the photographer Guy Bourdin - whose work was the technician twin of Helmut Newton's black-and-white fetishism-as-fashion. Bourdin, who died in 1991, remains a shadowy figure. Mother-obsessed and misogynistic, he helped push the unsuspecting and uncompelling

world of *haute couture* into the realms of hard pornography.

Robert Hughes is at full steam in the ongoing *American Visions* (Sun BBC2). Zig-zagging across the continent and the 1930s, he takes in skyscrapers, Edward Hopper, the social realism of the New Deal artists, the black diaspora northwards, and the hokey vernacular of Grant Wood's *American Gothic*.

Talking of hokey American vernacular - Colonel Oliver North is captured in *A Perfect Candidate* (Sun C4), running to represent Virginia in the 1994 Senate elections. *Primary Colours* it ain't, but the man at the centre of the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages deal showed a great deal of naïveté in coysing up with filmmakers RJ Cutler and David Van Taylor.

*Equinox* (Sun C4) looks at how the current anti-science populism is endangering vital research. Ironically, given the Vatican's historical antipathy to scientific enlightenment, it is the Pope's medical adviser, Professor Robert White (the only man to have conducted a successful head transplant - on a monkey), who is leading the fight for tolerance.



## The big match

**Zimbabwe v England**  
Sun 7am Sky Sports 2

England's cricketers shook off just enough of their winter cobwebs against Malawi last week to make a fist of their first ever match against Zimbabwe on Zimbabwean soil - a one-day international at the Queen's club in Bulawayo. Captain Mike Atherton (above) has only scored 13 runs on the tour so far, but opener Nick Knight notched up a century against Malawi and bowler Darren Gough picked up five wickets in the same game. Today's opposition is a step up in class, however.

# Saturday television and radio

## BBC 1

- 7.05 *The Pink Panther Show* (R) (1254085).
- 7.25 *News, Weather* (2970240).
- 7.30 *Children's BBC: The Muppet Files*. 7.40 *Speed Racer*. 8.05 *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest*.
- 8.30 *The New Adventures of Superman* (5588882). \*
- 9.15 *Live and Kicking*. Boyzone and Coronation Street actress Liz Dawn guest (S) (34119191).
- 12.12 *Weather* (1213795).
- 12.15 *Grandstand*. 12.20 *Football Focus*. 1.00 *News*. 1.05 *Racing from Haydock*: the 1.15 *Patrol Handicap* Steeplechase. 1.25 *Skiing*: Highlights from the men's downhill in Val d'Isère. 1.40 *Racing from Haydock*: the 1.45 *Tote Multibet Handicap Hurdle* Race. 1.55 *Rugby Union*: Preview of today's match between England and Argentina. 2.10 *Racing from Haydock*: the 2.15 *Tommy White Steeplechase*. 2.25 *Rugby Union*: England v Argentina: Live coverage from Twickenham. Commentary from Nigel Stammers-Smith and Bill Bevan, and the kick-off is at 3pm. 4.45 *Final Score* (2649673).
- 5.15 *News, Weather* (314573).
- 5.25 *Regional News and Weather* (6099646).
- 5.30 *The Simpsons*. Lisa falls in love with her substitute teacher (S) (780337). \*
- 5.55 *Jim Davidson's Generation Game* (S) (338191). \*
- 6.55 *Noel's House Party*. Uri Geller earns a Gotcha (S) (703801).
- 7.50 *The National Lottery Live*. Art Garfunkel sings "Bridge over Troubled Water" (S) (759199). \*
- 8.05 *Casualty*. Traditional pre-Christmas drink-driving storyline (S) (594004). \*
- 8.55 *News and Sport, Weather* (Followed by *National Lottery Update*) (885832). \*
- 9.15 *Blind of Faith* (R) (211356).
- 9.05 *One Foot in the Grave* (278469).
- 10.45 *Match of the Day*. Liverpool v Middlesbrough is the main event, followed by highlights of the World Cup qualifiers featuring Wales v Turkey and Northern Ireland v Albania (127426).
- 11.35 *The Stand-Up Show*. More hopefuls go through their stand-up patter (S) (436789).
- 12.05 *Top of the Pops*. As shown yesterday (R) (2304115).
- 12.35 *UK: The Intermittent Project* (Ken Hughes 1974 UK). Not brilliant, but original and underrated thriller which sees James Coburn as a professor of economics who is offered a top US government post as long as he eliminates the skeletons in his past - four spies in his European industrial espionage network. His plan is to get them to kill each other. Lee Grant, Harry Anderson, Ian Hendry and Michael Jayston co-star (3440405). \*
- 2.00 *Weather* (1741937). To 2.05am.
- REGIONS. Wales: 1.55pm World Cup Football: Wales v Turkey. 2.25pm Rugby Union: Scotland v Italy. NI: 11.35pm Match of the Day from Northern Ireland. 12.25 *The Hole in the Wall* Gang. 1.00 *The Stand-Up Show*. 1.30 *Top of the Pops*. 2.00 *Weather*.

## BBC 2

- 7.10 *The Saint Meets the Tiger* (Paul Stain 1943 US). Hugh Sinclair as the Leslie Charteris hero, taking on drug smugglers (3684424).
- 8.20 *Open University: Women, Children and Work* (3675608). 9.10 *Seeing Through Maths* (4747207). 9.35 *Norfolk Broads: Conservation v Commercialism* (2776882).
- 10.00 *Chenayya*. Indian historical epic (S) (2008207).
- 10.35 *Network East* (S) (5368153).
- 11.20 *Q Asia* (7713066).
- 11.50 *Film 96 with Barry Norman* (S) (9102820).
- 12.20 *Top Hat* (Mark Sandrich 1935 US). Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing cheek to cheek through lovely art deco sets in this, their quintessential musical together. Eleven Irving Berlin songs in all, as the plot of the Gay Divorcee is recycled and sent to Venice (665733). \*
- 1.55 *Intermezzo* (Gregory Ratoff 1939 US). David O. Selznick introduced his new foreign import, Ingrid Bergman, to the American public by playing it safe and remaking a film Bergman had previous had a hit with in Sweden. She is the piano teacher who begins an affair with the father (Leslie Howard) of one of her pupils. Synnry split, washed down with Brahms, Liszt and Grieg (8864356).
- 3.05 *Notorious* (Alfred Hitchcock 1946 US). See *The big picture*, above (19584269). \*
- 4.45 *TOTP 2* (S) (1947495).
- 5.30 *Bhowani Junction* (George Cukor 1956 UK). The last days of the Raj - and Anglo-Indian Ava Gardner is getting grief from Stewart Granger and his pure Brit pals. Fine melodrama capturing the political mood of the times (25780207).
- 7.15 *News and Sport, Weather* (342172).
- 7.30 *Making Waves*. To mark the 100th anniversary of the invention of the radio, the story of its inventor, Guglielmo Marconi (S) (6657820).
- 8.20 *What the Papers Say*. With Steve Richards of the *New Statesman* (S) (912375).
- 8.30 *An Italian Christmas - Recipes from the River Café*. See *Preview*, above (S) (5646). \*
- 9.00 *Have I Got News for You* (S) (6356).
- 9.30 *TX: Dreamgirls: The Photographs of Guy Bourdin*. See *Preview*, above (S) (206085). \*
- 10.20 *Crucial Tales*. "Phoenix" by Rohan Leslie, about a half-Irish, half-Pakistani man whose parents and sister are killed in an arson attack. Last of the dramas by black and Asian talent (109795). \*
- 10.50 *Later with Jools Holland*. With Suede, Alexander O'Neal and Ray Davies (S) (393017).
- 11.50 *10:10: Myleene's Pencil* (S) (100627).
- 12.00 *Jungle Fever* (Spike Lee 1991 US). Lee's examination of interracial love - in this case, between married and upwardly mobile African-American architect Wesley Snipes and his Italian-American secretary, Annabella Sciorra (Followed by *Weatherview*) (S) (16661776). To 2.15am.
- REGIONS. Scotland: 10.20pm Tartan Shorts. 10.40 *Crucial Tales*. 11.10 *Later with Jools Holland*. 12.10 *Film: Jungle Fever*.

## ITV/London

- 6.00 *GMTV*. 6.00 *News*. 6.10 *Mole in the Hole*. 6.30 *Professor Bubble*. 6.50 *Bug Alert*. 7.10 *Disney's Wake Up in the Wild Room*. 8.20 *Gargoyles*.
- 9.25 *Wow* (S) (36887375).
- 11.00 *The Noise*. The Spice Girls and Gary Barlow are the guests (S) (3646).
- 11.30 *The Chart Show*. Howard Jones in the Video Vault (S) (52288).
- 12.30 *Champions of the Future*. Young go-karters with Formula One-sized ambitions (36207).
- 1.00 *News and Weather* (82135882). \*
- 1.05 *Local News, Weather* (82134153). \*
- 1.10 *Movies, Games and Videos*. 101 *Dalmatians* is, inevitably, up for review (5708153).
- 1.45 *The Making of Star Trek: First Contact*. Movie plug (21265530).
- 2.10 *Hatari!* (Howard Hawks 1962 US). Leisurely and generally underrated late-Hawes adventure about the lives and loves of a group of animal trappers in East Africa. John Wayne, Elsa Martinelli and Red Buttons star (2223117).
- 4.45 *News, Sports Results, Weather* (S) (750356). \*
- 5.05 *London Tonight*. Sports Results (Followed by *LWT Weather*) (8837530).
- 5.20 *Cartoon Time* (6076795).
- 5.30 *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* (820). \*
- 6.00 *Gladstons* (S) (14998). \*
- 7.00 *Blind Date* (S) (2269). \*
- 8.00 *Family Fortunes* (Including Lottery Result) (S) (3527). \*
- 8.30 *ITV News, Weather, Lottery Result* (Followed by *LWT Weather*) (800191). \*
- 8.45 *Batman Returns* (Tim Burton 1992 US). Fans of beautiful women zipped into skintight pleated leather bodysuits will possibly get most out of Tim Burton's second foray into Gotham City, as Michael Keaton's caped crusader battles Danny DeVito's Penguin and - more ambiguously - Michelle Pfeiffer's Catwoman. Actually, there is a lot to admire here - most especially on the design side, although the script also crackles with Burton's trademark perversity wit. Christopher Walken, Michael Gough and Michael Murphy are in the support cast (S) (9590646). \*
- 11.00 *Digance in a Field of His Own*. "Richard Digance entertains an audience of 800 with his witty stories, songs and poetry." Just passing that on (S) (21375). \*
- 12.00 *A House of Secrets and Lies* (Paul Schneider 1992 US). Connie Sellecca plays a successful TV presenter who is persecuted by one of her on-air guests that she should no longer tolerate husband Kevin Dobson's womanising. Dial "T" for therapy (886937).
- 1.50 *Funny Business* (S) (2672467).
- 2.20 *The Chart Show* (R) (S) (3883776).
- 3.10 *El News Review* (5033738).
- 4.00 *The Best of God's Gift* (R) (3590554).
- 4.50 *Night Shift* (R) (S) (31126015).
- 5.05 *Coach* (R) (S) (169863). To 5.30am.

## Channel 4

- 6.00 *Early Morning: Sesame Street* (R) (78882).
- 7.00 *The Magic School Bus* (R) (S) (10269).
- 7.30 *Really Wild Animals* (1108172).
- 7.55 *Hong Kong Phooey* (R) (183240).
- 8.05 *King Arthur and the Knights of Justice* (R) (737298).
- 8.35 *Hang Time* (S) (6932172).
- 9.00 *The Morning Line* (S) (18998).
- 10.00 *Gazette*. Football Mail. Serie A preview (28288).
- 11.00 *Bill Gutteridge* review (S) (69004).
- 12.00 *Sign On* (S) (7838).
- 12.30 *Inside the Vatican*. Sir Peter Ustinov is your guide, this week slack-jawed in wonderment at De Vinci and Michelangelo's interior decor (R) (9074578).
- 1.20 *Madame O'Hara*. Animation (8214212).
- 1.30 *Racing from Cheltenham*. Brough Scott introduces the 1.55 *Bonaparte Handicap*. 2.30 *Tripleprint Gold Cup Handicap Chase*. 3.05 *Doubleprint Novices' Chase* and the 3.40 *Lonsome Glory Hurdle* (S) (9301074).
- 4.05 *Movies on Thames*. Repeat *Witness* film about the Arab community which has settled around the Edgware Road and Queensway area of north-west London (R) (S) (1083172). \*
- 5.05 *Brookside Omnibus*. *Aka The Simpsons* (S) (4123556). \*
- 6.30 *Right to Reply* (S) (960269). \*
- 7.10 *A Week in Politics*. Vincent Hanna and Andrew Rawnsley produce the week's wryest politics show on the box (S) (762714).
- 8.00 *The Saga of Life*. Last in the short series of programmes charting the life and career of Lennart Nilsson, looking at the revolutionary skills that eventually enabled him to take pictures of the unborn child (S) (9553).
- 9.00 *ER*. Greene treats a youngster who may need open-heart surgery (R) (S) (47207). \*
- 9.55 *Jo Brand - through the Cakeshale*. Gaby Roslin, Mark Larnar, Steve Cogan and Anna Stubbs join in a spoof game show (R) (S) (963820). \*
- 10.25 *NYPD Blue* (R) (S) (810462). \*
- 11.25 *The Fanny* (Brian De Palma 1978 US). De Palma's follow-up to *Candy* also involves teenagers with psychic powers - this one sees Andrew Stevens being kidnapped by government agent John Cassavetes, who's intent on harnessing the lad's kinetic powers for national security purposes. De Palma at his most cold and Hitchcockian, but his obsession with surface style is still going in the end right. Kirk Douglas and Amy Irving also star (S) (19578).
- 1.35 *Late Licence: Mangle* (S) (6137301).
- 2.35 *The New Twilight Zone*. A boy makes the shocking discovery of an evil force known as the Shadow Man living under his bed (S) (9941955).
- 3.05 *United States of Television*. Porn channels, the Republican Party's "GOP TV" broadcasts and interactive TV shopping (R) (S) (5043115).
- 3.50 *Mr Don and Mr George* (R) (S) (9018283).
- 4.20 *The Real World* (S) (3592912). To 5.15am.

## ITV/Regions

- AREA 1**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.15 *Film: Ernest Saves Christmas* (429256). 3.05 *Cartoon* (896172). 3.15 *Film: Baywatch* (Shattered) (592443). 12.00 *Film: The Tower* (402757). 1.40am *Cartoon Knowledge* (6986405). 2.35am *Film: Project: Tin Man* (962641). 3.45am *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *World of Sailing* (72660).
- AREA 2**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Premiere* (39207). 1.10 *Cartoon Time* (6921356). 1.25 *Dinosaurus* (30246714). 1.55 *Cartoon* (896172). 2.25 *Movies, Games and Videos* (36214153). 2.55 *Film: The Pluck* (780379). 3.50 *Alfred* (691646). 5.10 *Goats Extra* (513130). 4.50am *Johnnie* (7807641). 5.20-5.30am *Asian Eye* (1943680).
- AREA 3**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 4**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 5**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 6**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 7**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 8**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 9**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 10**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 11**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 12**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 13**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 14**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 15**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 16**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 17**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 18**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 19**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 20**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 21**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 22**  
As London except: 12.30pm *Movies, Games and Videos* (35207). 1.10 *Teaching Case* (30240301). 1.40 *Beach Volleyball* (2125682). 2.10 *Making of Star Trek: First Contact* (8026545). 2.40 *Wagner Classics* (3802646). 2.58 *Alfred* (780104). 3.45 *Video: Heller Steller* (545283). 4.30 *Coach* (41347). 5.00-5.30am *Freemason* (72660).
- AREA 23**  
As London except: 12.30pm





JEREMY WARNER

# Don't hold your breath over Guinness report

So finally, finally, after all these years, the Department of Trade and Industry is to publish its report on the Guinness affair. It might actually do so as early as next week, although the DTI was yesterday casting doubt on whether it could be ready quite so soon. The spark for this belated little act of public service is next Tuesday's ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg on whether Ernest Saunders, the former Guinness chairman, was unfairly tried over the Guinness shares fraud.

Whatever the judges have to say on the matter, the DTI takes the view that it is now free to publish the results of its 10-year investigation of how Guinness illegally won control of Distillers in the mid-1980s. Conspiracy theorists will believe the timing is dictated by the Government's desire to deflect attention from what is all too likely to be another slap in the face for British justice from the European courts. Europe might wish to say, or at least imply, that Mr Saunders and others didn't get a fair trial, but this report will claim in the strongest possible language that he is as guilty as sin. The Serious Fraud Office will fight tooth and nail to uphold the Guinness convictions, whatever the European court says.

I've followed the various twists and turns in the Guinness affair pretty closely over the years, but unfortunately I haven't yet been able to get my hands on a copy of the final

version of this report. However, from reasonably well informed gossip and an earlier unpublished draft it is possible to surmise roughly what's in it. Don't hold your breath.

Ten years after the event and with numerous criminal and civil trials to sift the evidence, there isn't a great deal the inspectors can say which is genuinely new about this affair. The Guinness scandal has passed into history and that's what the report is - a history book. There are no significant changes in the law, corporate governance or City practice the inspectors can recommend, for the lessons have been largely learnt and generally acted upon, in so far as they ever can be.

It is, of course, the case that the inspectors can still pass judgement on individuals and organisations still alive and kicking - and they will - but it isn't going to surprise anyone to learn that Mr Saunders is a crook or that Morgan Grenfell, his City advisers at the time, disregarded accepted rules and practices.

From what I bear about this report, however, the inspectors have missed an opportunity. In their analysis, evidence and judgement, they mirror very closely the prosecution case aired in the various criminal proceedings. Broadly, this attempts to pin blame for the scandal on a small group of key people and to varying degrees on the organisations they represented.

The central allegation is that led by Mr Saunders they conspired one with another illegally to support the Guinness share price and that this was kept secret not only from the markets (for the trick would not have worked if everyone had known the share price was being artificially supported), but also everybody else at Guinness and its professional advisers. Ergo these are the culpable ones and everyone else - lawyers, accountants, City advisers and the like - is in the clear. Indeed the case goes rather further than that, for to work properly - as it plainly did in the first Guinness trial - it needs you to believe that no one outside this inner core had any conception of what was going on. Moreover, they would have been profoundly shocked and tried to stop it had they known.

I've never believed this to be the full picture. It is largely true but the real story is more complicated - that the Guinness affair took place against a well established backdrop of cavalier practice and behaviour that encouraged the main protagonists into believing that if this was not quite the accepted way of doing things it was common enough at least to be tolerated. In some City firms practice of this sort was endemic, going unchecked either by internal controls or outside regulators.

I'm not saying here that any of the professionals caught up in the Guinness affair

knew what was going on or even that they should have been officiously running around the place saying there's something wrong here and we are going to find out about it. No one ever starts in these situations from the point of view that their client is a crook nor is it their job to act as watchdogs over the activities of others.

All the same, it seems astonishing that nobody suspected what was going on. At the very least they should have been more vigorous in their approach. In the cut and thrust of a contested takeover an anything goes culture rapidly takes hold. It is reasonable to expect established practitioners in these matters to keep things in check. Even after DTI inspectors were sent into Guinness the attitude among some remained one of relaxed complacency right up to the moment when the full enormity of the scandal emerged. Then everyone ran for cover.

The Ernest Saunders version of events, that all these professionals knew what was going on and conspired to pin the whole saga on him, is absurd. But with so many highly paid, top-drawer names around the table to advise and guide him, it is hard to understand how this could have been allowed to happen, even now, ten years after the event. There won't be much of this in the DTI report, however. The possibility that the whole thing might have been avoided had a more vigorous and professional approach

been adopted is simply not addressed. This is a shame for it might have led to a more rounded and illuminating report. The inspectors were in a position to tackle the question of whether the night watchman was asleep on the job. They appear to have decided not to.

Nobody should be too surprised by the spectacle of Duncan Lewis flouncing out of his Granada TV job so soon after joining. Incompatibility seems to be his middle name. He did much the same thing when he was at Cable & Wireless's Mercury Communications subsidiary. He lasted barely more than a year there too. Gerry Robinson and Charles Allen are hard task masters, applying a vigorous regime of management control and accountability throughout the Granada empire. In never seemed very likely that they would be able to work happily with Mr Lewis.

He'll claim that he never allowed the money or flexibility to do what he wanted with Granada's television interests. They'll claim he couldn't run a ... That's what happens when you get a difference of approach in business. The real problem, I suspect, is that Mr Lewis wants to be his own boss. He wasn't, either at Mercury or Granada. Mr Lewis is the type of executive who needs to be running his own show.

## Lopez stole GM secrets, court told

Imre Karacs  
Bonn

The former head of purchasing at General Motors, Jose Ignacio Lopez de Arriortua, systematically stole trade secrets from the company as part of a premeditated act hatched several months before he jumped ship for Volkswagen. German prosecutors claimed yesterday.

The allegations came as Mr Lopez was formally indicted on charges of industrial espionage by the prosecutor's office in Darmstadt, near Frankfurt.

Charged alongside Mr Lopez were three other former GM executives who defected to VW with him three-and-a-half years ago - Jose Manuel Gutierrez, Jorge Alvarez and Rosario Pizarra.

However, the prosecutors said that their investigation had found no evidence that VW's chief executive, Ferdinand Piech, or anyone else from the German car maker was involved in the alleged espionage. Gerhard Andres, the chief public prosecutor, said more serious charges of fraud were not filed because no measurable amount of financial damage to GM could be determined.

But referring to Mr Lopez and the other indicted executives, he said: "The accused planned to acquire business

documents from the research, planning, production, and purchasing departments with a view toward their planned joint move to VW." This had been premeditated and planned months ahead.

Mr Lopez, head of purchasing for GM's European subsidiary Opel had revolutionised the car maker's relationship with suppliers, preparing the ground for cheaper production.

He was first approached by Mr Piech in November 1992. Following their meeting, Mr Lopez and three of his closest colleagues began rifling through GM's confidential documents, the prosecutors allege.

In March 1993 Mr Lopez informed GM that he was leaving, whereupon he was offered a promotion, which he gratefully accepted. A few days later, however, Mr Piech trumped the counter-offer, and Mr Lopez this time handed GM his final letter of resignation and took the first plane to Germany.

At VW headquarters in Wolfsburg, the GM defectors set themselves up in offices enveloped in a bubble of hi-tech security. Their mission was to develop the concept for an assembly plant codenamed "B" in the Spanish Basque country.

The factory would be the embodiment of all Lopez pri-



Eye of the storm: German prosecutors Thomas Seifert (left) and Gerhard Andres during their announcement in Darmstadt yesterday of a criminal indictment charging the former VW executive Jose Ignacio Lopez and three associates with conspiracy to steal trade secrets when they defected from General Motors in 1993. Photograph: Herbert Propper/AP

ciples combined: cars would be slotted together from "modules", rather than smaller components as before, and fitted on the assembly line largely by workers employed by outside contractors at cheaper rates.

Only one such factory existed elsewhere in the world, and even then only in blueprint form: the bus-bus "Plant X" designed by GM and also designed for overseas Spain. These are the very plans that Mr Lopez is said to have stolen.

In addition to these plans the Darmstadt prosecutors claim that the four accused also pilched suppliers' price lists, cost information on virtually the entire GM-Opel range in Eu-

rope, and documents outlining GM's cost-cutting strategy for 1992.

If convicted, Mr Lopez could face a five-year prison term, though as a first offender he would probably escape with a hefty fine.

Lawyers acting for Mr Lopez challenged the prosecutors' findings, saying they had mistaken documents that GM had previously made public for company secrets and that many of their witnesses were not credible. Jurgen Taschke and Eberhard Wahl, representing Mr Lopez, said the charges would not stand up in court and they would seek to have them dismissed.

### Key dates in the Lopez affair

1990	Lopez joins GM Spain
1992	Lopez appointed Head of Purchasing at Opel
Nov 92	Lopez has first meeting with Ferdinand Piech, chairman of VW
Mar 93	Lopez joins VW as Head of Purchasing, then quits to become president of GM North America, which he then quits after a few days to rejoin VW
April 93	Opel starts legal action against Lopez for industrial espionage
8 Mar 96	GM files civil suit in America against VW for criminal "conspiracy"
13 May	VW sues GM for defamation
26 Nov	US judge in Detroit rules GM can pursue claim for damages
29 Nov	Lopez resigns from VW, but is rehired immediately as a consultant
13 Dec	Lopez and three other former executives formally indicted by German prosecutors

## Halifax raises mortgage rate

Jim Treanor  
Banking Correspondent

Halifax Building Society, the largest mortgage lender in the UK, finally raised its standard variable mortgage rate to 7.25 per cent yesterday, two weeks after its rivals acted on the quarter percentage point rise in base rates announced in October.

The move will allow the society to raise its savings rates in the new year when competition to woo savers is expected to hot up when several leading building societies plan to convert to banks, unleashing a £17bn windfall for investors.

Alliance & Leicester was the first of the big societies to increase mortgage rates earlier this month. But Halifax decided to hold off until this week's monthly meeting between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England before instigating its first rate rise since February 1995.

The move comes amid growing evidence that the housing market is staging a recovery and shows the need to increase the rates on offer to savers, who have lost out in the race among building societies and banks to win mortgage business.

"We always have to balance

the interests of our borrowers and savers whilst continuing to remain competitive in the market. The recovery in the housing market continues and over the last two years borrowers have benefited from low interest rates and low mortgage payments," said Mike Blackburn, chief executive of Halifax.

The rate rise by Halifax allowed Nationwide, the largest remaining building society, to yesterday increase its standard variable mortgage rates by a quarter of a point to 6.99 per cent - which is still a quarter of a point below that offered by the large lenders.

## Oxford Biomedica's debut flops

Magnus Grimond

Stock market jitters bartered another two new issues yesterday when Oxford Biomedica shares opened at less than half their placing price and it emerged that Fountain Forestry was cutting by 50 per cent the amount being raised from its own Alternative Investment Market flotation.

Oxford, a biotechnology group backed by Oxford University, saw its shares start dealing on AIM at just 42.5p yesterday morning, some 52 per cent below the 88p at which the shares were priced in October.

They ended slightly up at 47.5p.

Sentiment took a dive earlier this week when it was revealed that the two main underwriters, Stockton Trading, a Bahamian-registered company, and Kaj Kjekshus, a private Swedish investor, had withdrawn their combined £5m commitment to underwrite the £6.15m IPO, the move forced the company to delay first dealings until yesterday and reduce the amount being raised to £5m, which Oxford said was its minimum working capital requirement, although it had originally sought up to £11m.

Percy Lomax of sponsoring brokers Teather & Greenwood said the company was reserving its right to take legal action against the underwriters, whose actions were the main cause of the "appalling" opening price.

The flop is the latest in a list of disappointing biotechnology flotations. Earlier this year, Cambrio abandoned plans to float, and Xenova has been forced to cut the amount being raised by £2.4m to £22.6m.

The cews came as Fountain Forestry, which manages 80,000 hectares of forest and clears leaves from railway lines, said its placing would raise £2.5m, half the original target of £4.5m.

## IN BRIEF

### Swiss operator picks BT as partner

British Telecom yesterday further strengthened its network of European alliances after it was selected as one of the international partners for Switzerland's second licensed telecoms operator Newtelco. BT and Tele Danmark will acquire a significant minority stake in Newtelco, which was set up earlier this year by Swiss Federal Railways, Union Bank of Switzerland and Migros-Genossenschaftsbund, the country's largest retailer.

### Foster's settles forex action

Foster's Brewing Group of Australia has agreed to settle its civil action over alleged fraudulent foreign exchange deals against John Elliott, the former chief executive, and others. The others that are covered by the settlement are former executives Peter Scanlon, Ken Higgins and Ken Jarrett, the Bank of New Zealand and auditor Price Waterhouse. "The terms of the settlement ... remain confidential," said Foster's, which had sued Messrs Elliott, Scanlon and Higgins in a bid to recover A\$66.5m (£32m) allegedly lost in fraudulent foreign exchange transactions in 1988.

### Toad motors towards full listing

Toad, the car gadgets group founded by Chris Evans, the biotechnology tycoon, is tapping the market for £7.1m in a five-for-nine open offer at 80p, and moving to a full listing. The company, currently quoted on the Alternative Investment Market, said it wanted to spend £1.35m opening another five or six deposits to add to the existing 17. Interim losses deepened from £801,000 to £2.46m, but Toad is forecasting profits in the year to March 1998.

### Burnfield to pay \$24m for Ling

Burnfield has reached agreement to acquire Ling Dynamic Systems Limited for £24m. Ling designs and makes vibration testing equipment used by the aerospace, electronics and automotive industries. The acquisition will be financed mainly by a £20.5m, seven-for-10 rights issue at 90p per share. Ling made pre-tax profits of £2.3m in the year ended 31 July. Burnfield forecasts operating profit for the year ending 31 December will be not less than £3.5m.

### John Lewis sales ahead 13 per cent

John Lewis Partnership said total sales for the 19 weeks to 7 December were 11 per cent ahead of the same period last year. Sales in John Lewis department stores were 13.9 per cent ahead while sales in Waitrose supermarkets showed a 11 per cent increase.

### Ladbroke solves Hilton dispute

Ladbroke has reached an out-of-court settlement in a rent review dispute with the landlord of the Paris Hilton. The parties have been in litigation over the level of rent payable on the hotel since 1992. Under the settlement the annual charge for 1996 and each year to 2008 will be £47m (£5.5m), indexed annually for inflation. Separately, Ladbroke said it has sold the 400-room Washington Vista Hotel in Washington DC for \$47m (£28m), to Interstate Hotels.

### Asda launches unisex perfume

Asda claimed it was the first supermarket to enter the premium perfume market yesterday when it launched its first fragrance, George I. The unisex scent is priced at £9.99, in a bid to undercut rivals such as Calvin Klein's CK.

### Bunzl in talks to buy Filtrona

Bunzl is in discussions regarding the possible cash purchase of the bonded fibres business of American Filtrona, which is listed on Nasdaq. The bonded fibres business, which had sales of \$6.29m (£36m) and made operating profits of \$7.3m in 1995, manufactures and sells cigarette filters and ink reservoirs.

### Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
US	1.6532	1.6532	1.6532	1.6532	1.6532
Canada	2.2508	2.2508	2.2508	2.2508	2.2508
Germany	2.5601	2.5601	2.5601	2.5601	2.5601
France	6.6601	6.6601	6.6601	6.6601	6.6601
Italy	2.5371	2.5371	2.5371	2.5371	2.5371
Japan	167.97	167.97	167.97	167.97	167.97
ECU	1.3696	1.3696	1.3696	1.3696	1.3696
Belgium	36.275	36.275	36.275	36.275	36.275
Denmark	92.023	92.023	92.023	92.023	92.023
Netherlands	2.0371	2.0371	2.0371	2.0371	2.0371
Sweden	10.722	10.722	10.722	10.722	10.722
Switzerland	2.1781	2.1781	2.1781	2.1781	2.1781
Australia	2.0075	2.0075	2.0075	2.0075	2.0075
South Africa	2.3771	2.3771	2.3771	2.3771	2.3771
India	2.3988	2.3988	2.3988	2.3988	2.3988
Singapore	2.3988	2.3988	2.3988	2.3988	2.3988

### Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Argentina	165.94	165.94	165.94	165.94	165.94
Australia	1.6532	1.6532	1.6532	1.6532	1.6532
Canada	2.2508	2.2508	2.2508	2.2508	2.2508
China	13.7656	13.7656	13.7656	13.7656	13.7656
Egypt	3.4051	3.4051	3.4051	3.4051	3.4051
France	6.6601	6.6601	6.6601	6.6601	6.6601
Germany	2.5601	2.5601	2.5601	2.5601	2.5601
Greece	339.545	339.545	339.545	339.545	339.545
India	49.976	49.976	49.976	49.976	49.976

Forward rates quoted low to high are at a discount  
 \* Other rates quoted as premiums  
 † For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033  
 Cables cost 50p per minute (daytime) 45p other times

### Interest Rates

UK	Base	900%	Germany	Base	250%	US	Base	8.75%	Japan	Base	0.50%
France	Intervention	3.00%	Canada	Discount	4.50%	Spain	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	Discount	2.50%
Italy	Discount	7.5%	Portugal	Discount	4.75%	Sweden	Discount	5.25%	Central	Discount	3.00%
Netherlands	Discount	5.00%	Denmark	Discount	5.00%	Switzerland	Discount	5.00%	Switzerland	Discount	5.00%
Advances	2.50%	Discount	2.25%	Repos (Ave)	4.00%	Lombard	Discount	4.00%			

### Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	30yr
UK	7.1%	7.3%	7.1%	7.8%	8.5%
US	5.1%	6.2%	6.5%	6.7%	7.1%
Japan	5.5%	5.4%	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%
Australia	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%
Germany	5.2%	5.1%	5.2%	5.3%	5.2%
France	7%	6.4%	6.5%	6.4%	6.4%

### Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%
Sterling Cds	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%
Local Authority Dps	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%
Discount Market Dps	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%
Treasury Bils (Bul)	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%
Dollar Cds	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%
ECU Linked Dps	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%

### Tourist Rates

£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys
Australia (Dollars)	2.0075	France (Francs)	6.6601	New Zealand (Dollars)	2.3988
Austria (Schillings)	13.7656	Germany (Mark)	2.5601	Norway (Krone)	13.7656
Belgium (Francs)	36.275	Greece (Drachmas)	339.545	Portugal (Escudos)	200.482
Canada (Dollars)	2.2508	Hong Kong (Dollars)	7.75	Spain (Pesetas)	166.639
Cyprus (Pounds)	0.80	India (Rupees)	49.976	Sweden (Kronor)	4.66
Denmark (Kroner)	92.023	Italy (Lira)	2.5371	Switzerland (Francs)	2.0371
Holland (Guilder)	2.0371	Japan (Yen)	167.97	United States (Dollars)	1.6532
Finland (Markka)	75.400	Malaysia (Ringgit)	2.3771		

### Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est/Cont traded	Open interest
Long US (Dec 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short US (Dec 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long UK (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short UK (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Japan (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Japan (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Germany (Dec 96)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Germany (Dec 96)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long France (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short France (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Italy (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Italy (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Spain (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Spain (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Portugal (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Portugal (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Greece (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Greece (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Sweden (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Sweden (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Norway (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Norway (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Australia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Australia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long New Zealand (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short New Zealand (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Hong Kong (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Hong Kong (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Singapore (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Singapore (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Taiwan (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Taiwan (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Korea (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Korea (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long India (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short India (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long China (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short China (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Russia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Russia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Mexico (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Chile (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Peru (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Colombia (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Venezuela (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Ecuador (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Paraguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Uruguay (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Argentina (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Brazil (Mar 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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## the saturday story

# Netanyahu's coming war

As Israelis and Palestinians bury their dead in the West Bank, Robert Fisk visits southern Lebanon where he finds evidence of a conflagration in the making

An explosion is coming in the Middle East, a detonation that may well change the region forever. We in the West have largely chosen not to heed the signs of impending calamity, preferring instead to pretend that the long-dead and deeply flawed "peace process" still has life in its decaying body, that the vernal institutions of the Palestinian authority may yet control their society and create a democratic state or that the Israeli prime minister really means peace when he orders the seizure of more Arab land on the West Bank for Jewish homes.

But the Arab world is bracing itself for the shock wave of terrible events over the coming months as a right-wing Israel is confronted by the fury of those Arabs who believe they have been betrayed not only by Israel and by meaningless peace agreements but by the United States, which acted as guarantor of every treaty and every annex.

Just where the explosion will come may seem academic. Will it be in Ramallah, besieged by Israeli troops since the murder of a Jewish settler and her son in the occupied West Bank, claimed by a Palestinian group based in Damascus? Will it come in Hebron, from which Israel has failed to withdraw troops under the terms of its own signed agreement with the Palestinians? In Yasser Arafat's slum state of Gaza? Or will it come – and again, the world pays no attention to this possibility – in Lebanon? For if Benjamin Netanyahu is, as president Mubarak and Assad and King Hussein suspect, deliberately provoking the Arabs in order to destroy even the memory of the "peace process", then the answer may be found on a treeless, wind-swept hillside

called Jebel Basil. One of a series of low, stony escarpments in southern Lebanon, it forms part of the dividing line between Israel's occupation army in Lebanon and the United Nations zone to the north.

The terrain is important because, on 9 November, the Israelis, while manning an artillery compound on top of a neighbouring hill, sent one of their American-made M-60 tanks – known in Israel as a "Magash" – down a small road cut into the side of Jebel Basil. With their vehicle draped in armour, the tank crew had no reason to fear the journey. The pro-Iranian Hizbollah, which attacks Israel's occupation troops daily, had been unable to damage Israeli tanks with their wire-guided, Russian-made Sagger missiles.

On this occasion, however, a Nepalese soldier serving with the UN saw a Hizbollah man preparing to fire a new kind of missile from behind a large bush on Jebel Basil. The rocket soared across the hillsides, made contact with the tank and burned its way through the armour, exploding when it had penetrated the hull. One Israeli soldier was killed and two others seriously wounded.

Just 24 hours later, the Israelis sent another heavily armoured M-60 to drag the carcass of the destroyed tank away. Again, the Hizbollah were waiting, and again they fired a missile which burned through inches of armour, detonating inside the tank, this time badly wounding the three man crew. Eyewitnesses were quick to recognise the new weapon as a Russian 113 "Konkurs" anti-tank guided missile – codenamed Spandrel by Nato – which uses a shaped charge heat (high explosive anti-tank) warhead to burn through armour.

The Israelis were equally quick to react. They secretly withdrew all their M-60 tanks from southern Lebanon, replacing them with the better armoured Israeli-made Merkavas. With equal secrecy, they abandoned at night one of their strongest compounds above the Litani river at Ainman, which is subject to daily missile attacks. Confidential orders were given to Israeli troops that the Hizbollah had so deeply infiltrated the ranks of Israel's own satrap militia, the "South Lebanon Army", that they were no longer to mount joint patrols with the militiamen nor share artillery compounds with them.

Israel, in other words, is on the run in southern Lebanon. The roads are so prone to guerrilla attack that at least one Israeli position is now resupplied from the sea by Zodiac dinghies launched from gunboats. The commander of Israel's SLA militia, Antoine Lahd, has been sentenced to death in absentia by a Lebanese military court, while one of Israel's Lebanese collaborators, after being convicted of planting a bomb which killed the brother of a pro-Iranian Hizbollah sympathiser and two civilians, was put before a firing squad in a Beirut prison. The only publicly stated response to this fiasco was the announcement by Israel that it had formed a supposedly elite military squad in its Lebanese occupation zone known as Egoz – the Hebrew word for walnut.

Far from being elite, Egoz was responsible for laying booby-trap bombs in the UN zone during last April's Israeli-Hizbollah war, a mine-setting exercise that was ambushed by Hizbollah from near the Qana

UN headquarters; Israel's response to that ambush was to fire back, slaughtering more than 100 civilians sheltering inside. "We know how to crack walnuts," Hizbollah radio replied. "They are hard on the outside but soft inside."

What has worried UN officers in Lebanon, however, has been the journalistic and political response to these largely uncovered events. First, the Israeli press and then American journalists began reporting, in remarkably similar language, a massive new "terrorist" threat in Lebanon. No sooner had the *Jerusalem Post* proclaimed the danger than the *Washington Post* was reporting from the Lebanese city of Baalbek that Bahraini, Saudi, Algerian, Kuwaiti, Kurdish, Sudanese, Bosnian and even Basque separatists were training in Lebanese "terrorist" camps. The report quoted unnamed security "officials" – some of whom were presumably Israeli – even if it did coyly admit that

"exactly who is being trained and for what missions are among the many mysteries..."

By 24 November, the *Boston Globe* was reporting "In Mideast, a renewal of terror", adding that "the Middle East seems to be slipping back into its old ways" – whatever that means. Another American paper speculated on the possibility of a Hizbollah missile attack on Haifa – Hizbollah have no missile capable of reaching that city – and of a Syrian "decision" (unsourced) to give greater support to "terror groups". By Tuesday this week, Israeli joint chief of staff General Matan Vilnai was saying that Israel will strike "very hard" if Syria went to war. Syria, of course, gives its encouragement to Hizbollah, allows weapons to pass through Damascus, and is in no mood to restrain the guerrilla group when the Israelis are publicly washing their hands of the "land for peace" deal brokered by

Washington that would have returned the Golan Heights to Syria in return for a peace treaty.

Lebanon fears that they understand all too well both the journalist and repeated threats of massive retaliation by Israel. "The Israelis are preparing the ground," a Western military officer said this week. "Maybe they won't strike, but they are preparing public opinion for large-scale military action in Lebanon – against Hizbollah, against the Syrians. They want the Syrians to realise who's boss – and they want the Syrians to come to the negotiating table without getting Golan back. Where are all these 'terrorists'? What is all this nonsense about Basque ETA guerrillas? This is the same rubbish the Israelis had the press writing before they invaded in 1982, only then it was Palestinian 'terror camps'."

So convinced were the

Americans by these reports – most of them inspired, of course, by *Israeli* – that they sent a military delegation to Tel Aviv to find out if there really was a military threat from mass "terrorism" or from the Syrian army. They discovered, according to an impeccable source, that the Israeli reports were mostly based on an outdated Israeli army logistics department document. In Beirut, US embassy officials summoned UN personnel in the hope of learning whether Hizbollah was really threatening a mass "terrorist" attack. American intelligence operatives concluded that the reports were rubbish, and that Israel's prime concern – far from being "terrorism" – was that Hizbollah guerrillas were effectively making life impossible for Israel's occupation force in southern Lebanon.

The fact that this occupation only continues because Israel wishes to have a strong hand in any future Israeli-Lebanese peace talks has long been

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu weeps at the funeral of the two soldiers murdered near Ramallah this week. Photograph: Reuters

acknowledged by the UN and, more privately, by the United States. The occupation zone (10 per cent of Lebanon) does not protect Israel, a fact amply demonstrated in April when, in response to a booby-trap bomb that killed a Lebanese boy – the work of Egoz, they suspect – Hizbollah fired hundreds of Katyushas across the border. Since April, 24 Lebanese civilians have been wounded by Israeli gunfire – in the same period, no Israeli civilians have been hurt by Hizbollah. Israel has lost 18 occupation soldiers since April; Hizbollah lost 20 guerrillas – in other words, a low-intensity war, but nothing to justify the bellicose words the Lebanese have been listening to.

Yet fears are growing in Lebanon, not least because Washington, freed from presidential elections, appears to be as supine as ever in the face of Israel's every wish. When Netanyahu announced further Jewish settlement in east Jerusalem – an act that effectively destroyed any hope of final status talks in the "peace process" – the State Department did not even condemn "the decision", calling it instead a "complicating factor".

"An assault on Lebanon is not likely to elicit any more courageous comment from Washington. The appointment of the faithfully pro-Israeli Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State produced only one comment from Lebanon's president, Elias Hrawi. "God protect us," he said.

Across the Arab world, they are saying much the same. Presidents and kings are all warning the West of the coming conflagration. Mubarak is said by those closest to him to be in a state of deep despair. King Hussein is even reported to have considered breaking off all ties with Israel. President Assad, still politely urging the Americans to intervene, has no illusions. "Will the Israelis continue to defy the will of the whole world while the international community does nothing?" one Syrian paper asked this week. They probably will. And it may well be Lebanon, as usual, that pays the first price.

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**Luvvy jubbly**

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## jo brand's week

Tuesday found me in Selfridges, having agreed to work there for two hours on behalf of the Terrence Higgins Trust. Selfridges was donating 10 per cent of takings for the evening. I have to confess these things are an ordeal. One has to steel oneself to be an exhibit and to be moved around as required. The usual gaggle of charming photographers had their imaginations working overtime in Santa's grotto as they suggested I drape myself seductively over Santa, who looked as unhappy about the idea as I did. The experience was eased to a great extent by the staff, who whisked me round and let me have the odd sneaky tag behind various displays (Thank you Tony, Paul, Penny and Mark). Other people off the telly were doing similar things ("Go on Jo, give 'im a Kiss," as I passed Richard Wilson). But there's no doubt that doing some good does do you good. Everyone in Selfridges was in such a good mood that I can't imagine why they don't do it every day. Well, perhaps I can.

Sitting in a queue of traffic on the A40 out of London to Oxford is something I do

quite a lot. At the traffic lights, various blokes ply their wares to disgruntled travellers sitting nose to tail. The other day my reverie was interrupted by someone shouting at me, "Oh, Jo!" I turned to see a lorry driver. "Oh Gawd, here we go," I thought – and then realised he was proffering a bunch of roses. With a cheery "Happy Christmas," he passed them to me. What a surprise, because I wasn't even wearing Impulse.

As the *Mirror* metamorphoses into *The Sun*, with just the lack of a pair of exposed mammaries to choose between them, it is depressing to realise that the vast majority of people in this country who purchase newspapers – and I use that term loosely – are being challenged intellectually only to the age of nine. This presumably must be why women are concerned only about Tony Blair's tassets, why no one gives a toss about Europe and why supermodels' opinions on life are valued. The tabloids are a depressing indictment of contemporary British life. Oh yeah, and they slag me off all the time too.

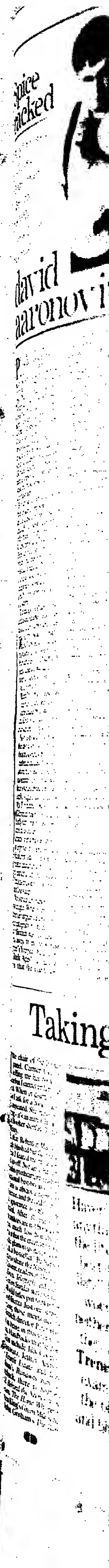
A company from America has taken over its first British prison, heralding, one would imagine, a bit of a rush by the Americans to sort out our criminal population, as if they hadn't got enough to do back home. Still, it's not really about that is it, silly me? It's about making profits on the backs of a section of the population many of whom started life without a hope. Not having a hope in England does put you in a slightly better position than not having a hope in America, where the size of the prison population is a testament to the desperation of people who have nothing in the richest society in the world. Still, an American ethos which is all but ingrained in this country anyway will ensure that the charmingly named

Corrections Corporation of America will be able to drum up plenty of new business, I'm sure.

All those fitness-obsessed people who have tried to force relentless sporting activity down the throats of the rest of us must be very saddened this week to discover that research has shown that young types who take part in non-team sports such as aerobics and tennis are far more likely to become delinquents than those who don't. I have to confess having only been to aerobics once in my life, some 10 or so years ago, and it was the most hideous nightmare I have ever indulged in which seemed to me reminiscent of the atmosphere of those Hitler Youth mass exercises.

At one point we had to do arm exercises to the extended version of "Free Nelson Mandela", and I found myself thinking after some minutes, "I wish they bloody would," if only to release us all from this torment. I never went back and I can say, with my poor limp hand on my heart, that since then I've not even indulged in the tinniest bit of shoplifting.

The ego of some people is breathtaking sometimes. I saw a little snippet of news this week about an Essex businessman who has recently paid £80,000 to have a personalised number plate bearing his name, "Nigel". I cannot understand why you would want to drive round and demonstrate to the rest of the traffic on the road that you are prepared to spend a large fortune on attaching your own "I'm a bit of a big head" name to your vehicle. Spending that amount of money on a minor ego massage, when it could have gone to a million better places, seems obscene to me. I'd like to creep up his drive one night and replace it with a new number plate bearing the legend "Knobhead", for that is what he is.





Spice  
racked

They have sold  
millions in  
Japan, where  
'Wannabe'  
probably  
means 'I love  
squirrels'

david  
aaronovitch



Pop stars don't win elections. Billy Bragg failed to secure the youth vote for Kinnock and David Bowie's contribution to the triumph of Mrs Thatcher has not been thought worthy of a published thesis by Professor Anthony King of Essex University. Nor will the interview with the Spice Girls – as featured in this week's *Spectator* – do very much to save John Major. As was admitted recently by a Labour PR man, celebrity endorsement is important only in the sense that "you look sad if you don't have any."

For those unfamiliar with the pop scene, the Spice Girls are the latest in a long line of tame early teen idols, inheritors of the mantle of the Bay City Rollers, Bros and Take That. Their unique selling proposition is that they are feisty, in-your-face females. They have, of course, sold millions in Japan, where "Wannabe" (their latest hit) probably means "I love squirrels."

They are also brilliantly marketed as collectables. Each one has a different name and gimmick (Sporty, Scary, Ginger, Posh and Baby Spice). It can only be a matter of time before the manufacturers of Barbie or Sindy release all five at £13.99 a shot and parents find themselves purchasing the set. Hardly will they have done this than the Spice Girls will split up and be replaced by John Thaw and Kevin Whately, singing cover versions of Elvis Presley.

So bloody what? Given all the above, what does it matter that these young women should embrace the cause of low taxation, the House of Lords, the monarchy, Europhobia and free love (a combination that, curiously, suggests an image of Mrs T romping topless on a Californian beach)? And it is hardly surprising that the *Spectator*, in its current right-wing anarchic incarnation, should so approve of young women whose approach to life is materialistic, unlettered by youthful principle and hedonistic. That is no reason for the rest of us to lose sleep.

Nor is their ignorance in any way unique. When Geri (Ginger Spice) argues against European integration on the basis that "Britain was the first to break away from the Roman Empire" (Yippee, here come the Dark Ages!), at least she knows that the islands were

once under the sway of Rome. I wouldn't swear that Kiki Dee knows as much. When Geri goes on to assert that "we travel through Europe and all those countries look the same. Only England looks different," we can afford to smile, knowing that a quick visit to Siena followed by a trip to Heligoland ought to sort that one out. The simultaneous belief in the hereditary principle ("earls and dukes are good for tourism") and pure meritocracy suggests an unformed quality in the Girls' thinking.

And yet I hate this interview and I hate them for giving it and I hate their interviewer – Simon Sebag Montefiore – for enjoying it so much. The one line which sums it up for me is this: "Labour does things for everyone, which might create laziness." This is the pure doctrine of welfare dependency, which I am prepared to accept from those who believe in decent state-funded education, a minimum wage and assistance to return to work (to those who have an alternative to dependency other than immigration), but not from those whose sole criticism of Blair is that they do not like his tax policies.

Well, draws my pal from the leftest section, what's the big deal? They have absorbed the orthodox drive of the pure market much as you and I (a large hand drops sympathetically on my shoulder) absorbed all that Fabian drive about redistribution and demand-led economics. Chill out.

Ah yes, I think, but our drive was better than their drive. Our drive was about the need to improve life for people, about moral responsibility, about no man being an island. It was only as we got older that we discovered that it was difficult to do. But their drive means that they don't want to do it at all, even if it was easy! They don't start idealistic and become realistic; they start cynical and will become monstrous.

Up pops another friend. The polls tell us (should we care to listen) that among no section of the population is Labour's lead as great as among 18-24-year-old women. The Spice Girls are out of tune, maybe. But there's something in this Tamara Beckwith, have-it-all, tolerant but apathetic, supremely individualistic culture which suggests that (as Cyndi Lauper didn't sing) girls just wanna be shits.

"H"old on to your Confederate money, boys – the South will rise again! But the way old southern jokes are not altogether a joke any longer. More than 150 years after Robert E Lee's surrender at Appomattox court house, with a man from Arkansas starting his second term in the White House, it looks as if the South won the Civil War after all.

A third of a century ago, when the civil rights movement was transforming the society of the southern states, everyone assumed that the South was a backward, vestigial region. As a young reporter, I interviewed Martin Luther King and other leaders of the peaceful revolution. In places such as Oxford, Mississippi, and Selma, Alabama, I witnessed the ferocious violence with which an angry minority of southern whites resisted change. I watched as George Wallace and other southern leaders shouted, "The South says never!"

At the time, everybody – northern whites, southern blacks and even most southern whites, as well as foreign journalists like me – took it for granted that the South would have to become more like the rest of the country. In some ways, of course, it did. Legal segregation died. Within years, prosperous blacks were sitting down to lunch and dining in swimming pools with whites. Strict taboos disappeared, unlearned, overnight.

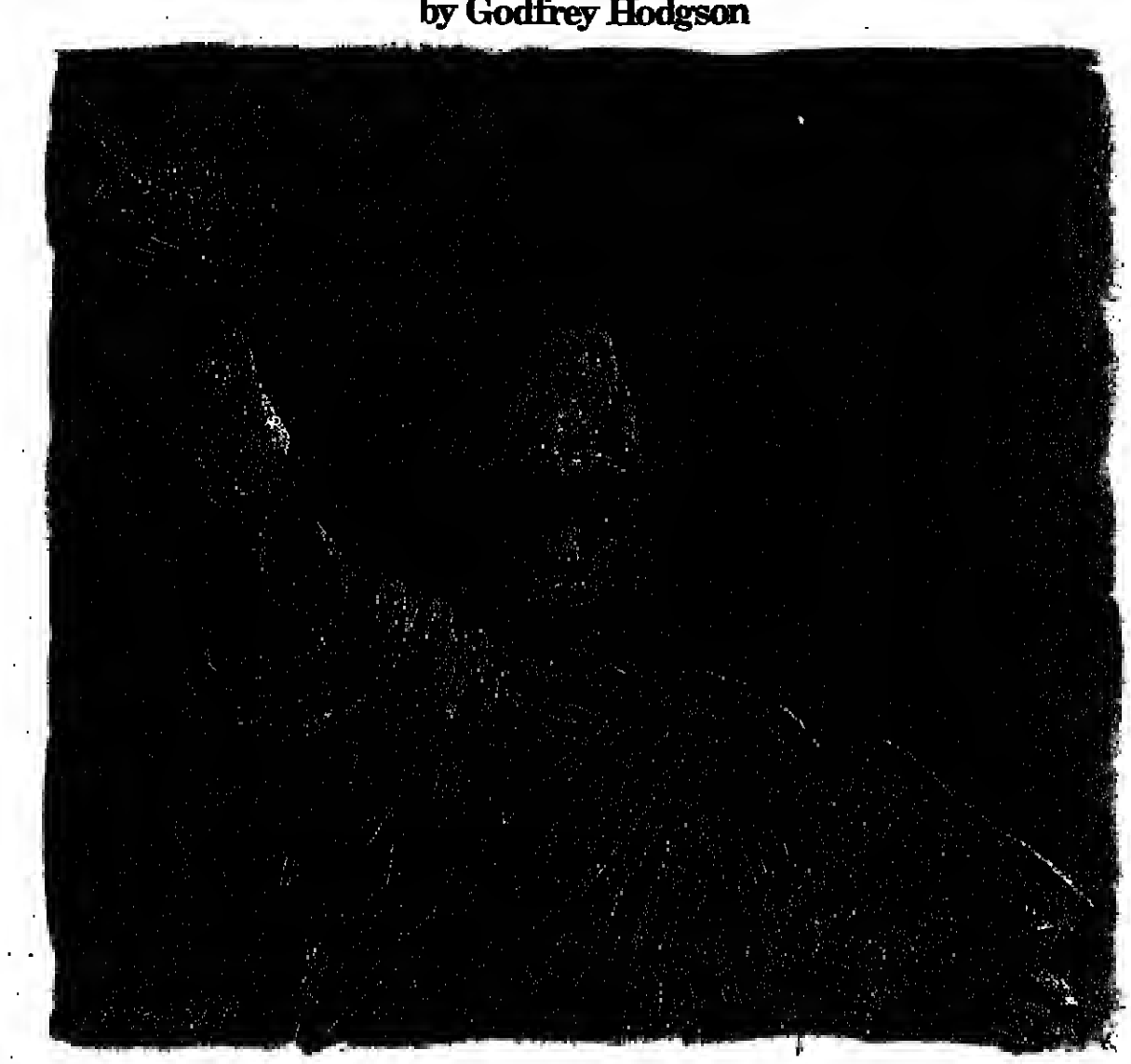
The South got richer. In 1940, President Roosevelt set up a national commission to investigate what he called "the nation's number one economic problem" – the South. Economically, the Deep South was then an underdeveloped country inside the body of the most developed country on earth. Standards of housing, transport, health and, above all, education were the lowest in the country for whites, never mind blacks.

By the late 1960s, the South was becoming the Sunbelt. Gleaming towers rose in the business districts of southern cities. The sprawling suburbs of these and other southern cities, with their handsome houses at low prices, their sunshine and their golf courses, offered a standard of living for executives that was the envy of counterparts in New York or Chicago.

In the 1940s, the 11 states of the Confederacy had about a quarter of the people of the US. Now they account for a rough third of the national population, and more if you count the southern migrants who thronged to California.

In other ways, however, something quite unexpected has happened. The rest of the US has become more like the South.

The southernisation of American culture is pervasive. Nashville, not New York's Tin



Something quite unexpected has happened – the rest of the United States has become more like the South

Pan Alley, is now the capital of the music business. Country music, once the whining music of the southern white working class, is everybody's music now.

Professional sports, especially golf, baseball, football and basketball, which through television have a huge influence on popular culture, are largely dominated by southerners, including southern-born blacks such as Michael Jordan, the ultimate basketball superstar.

Southern religion is triumphant. The once-mainstream Protestant denominations – Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists – are all losing membership. Southern evangelicals, including the once-despised Pentecostals, are on the rise, and the Southern Baptist Convention, originally the whites-only church of the defeated South, is growing fast in numbers and power. The religious right is southern in origins and largely run by southerners such as Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed.

Politically, the domination of the South is both visible and profound. The President comes from Arkansas, the Vice-president from Tennessee. The Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, comes from Georgia, and most of his most prominent lieutenants are southerners, too. When the job of majority leader of the Senate fell vacant a few months ago, the two candidates for the powerful job were the two senators from Mississippi – Trent Lott (who won) and Thad Cochran.

Twenty-five years ago, Mississippi accents sounded like a broken banjo string in political Washington. Now the President of the United States likes to sneak out of the White House to eat catfish and collard greens in what would once have been a contradiction in terms – a smart southern restaurant, called Sweet Georgia Brown.

The grip of the South over national politics goes back, paradoxically, to the civil rights revolution. Before the 1960s, the South was a one-party region. The great majority of

white southerners could never forgive the party of Abraham Lincoln for winning the war, freeing the slaves and billeting the Union army in their home towns. So they were "yellow dog" Democrats – they'd vote for a yellow dog, so long as he was a Democrat.

Now, from the 1960s on, all that has changed. It was the northern Democrats and "the Kennedys" who had violated the southern way of life. (People forgot that President Johnson, who did most for black rights, was a southerner himself). Black southerners began to vote, and they voted Democrat. The middle classes from the azalea-clad suburbs began to vote Republican. Now, 30 years on, the reversal is almost complete. Most white southern males vote Republican and call themselves conservatives.

The switch has had a dramatic effect on national politics. Until the 1960s, Congress was controlled in theory by a Democratic majority but in

reality by a conservative alliance between Republicans and southern Democrats. Now conservative southerners dominate the Republican majority, while to dispel the dangerous impression that they are the party of blacks, minorities and women, the national Democrats have had to move to the Right, picking southern leaders such as Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and (probably next) Al Gore to lead them.

The consequences of the southern hegemony are immense, both for America and for the world. The *New York Times's* correspondent in Atlanta, Peter Applebome, points out in a new book, *Dixie*

A funny thing is happening, though. More than five million blacks left the bad old South to go north. Now, starting with the most highly qualified, some of them are going home. And I think I can understand why.

Southern culture may be provincial, but – properly packaged – it has its universal appeal, as Coca Cola and country music, southern fried chicken and cowboy fashions have all proved. As writers and story-tellers, preachers and politicians, southerners have a way with words.

Above all, they have the advantage over their fellow Americans that they have experienced both defeat and guilt. They know what it is to fight bravely and still lose. And they know what it is to be wrong. Now the New South is trying to show it has learned the lesson that the way to win in the long run is not to say "Never!" but to change.

## Taking the best out of bestseller

The chair of the Booker panel, Carmen Calli, is telling me her books of the year but I cannot understand a word. When in doubt, bluff, and so I ask for a book's name to be repeated. She bursts out laughing – it's an author. He was on the Booker shortlist! Rohinton Mistry.

Oh, that Rohinton Mistry. I not only blushed but flushed so red that I feared the fire alarm would go off. Nor am I the only one in this predicament; reading the seasonal best-books-of-the-year lists is always a humbling experience, and the odd flash of guilty ignorance is only to be expected. After all, many of these authors are not bookshop names, much less household names. Why is it that the great, the good and the glamorous never seem to pick a bestseller? Perhaps it is time to shun the bluffs.

This year, readers of *The Sunday Times*, *Telegraph* and *Independent on Sunday* were treated to 200 odd titles put forward by some 60 literati. Just one of them is among those mentioned by Bookwatch director Peter Harland as being in this year's top sellers. Harland's choice is Jilly Cooper's *Appassionata*, Jeffrey Archer's *The Fourth Deadly Sin*, and John Grisham's *Runaway Jury*. In Grisham's *Runaway Jury*, there is *Sophie's World*, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, *The Horse Whisperer*, Stephen King's *Green Mile* series and John Grisham's *The Rain-*



Haven't read anything on the literati's best-book lists? Don't worry – neither have they. Ann Treneman examines the bluffs and blushes

maker. In non-fiction, look for Jack Charlton's *Autobiography* and something called *True Animal Tales* by Rodd Harris. Delta may outsell them all, and don't forget to add on something to do with the X-Files to most of those lists. That could end up as series of the year, says Mr Harland.

So why have the literati taken the best out of bestseller? "Many pick books that they are pretty confident no one else has read, including themselves," says Jeffrey Archer, secure in the knowledge he had chosen a Le Carré. "Also, it's quite common for critics to support each other." Sure enough, the lists have a mesmerising roundabout quality in terms of names and name-dropping.

Archer is not a name on that roundabout and that must rankle a bit. "Someone is reading, because I'm selling more than ever. For my part, I do choose the books that I like," he says. "Some I choose are so-called low-brow, popular fiction and I'm not at all embarrassed to do so." But what are we to make of his other choice? *The Dictionary of Art* runs to 34 volumes and costs £4,900. Archer is clearly baffled with it – "For art buffs like myself, if you can't get John Julius Norwich to come and live with you, this is the next best thing." But low brow it isn't.

Cooper seems to have suddenly been struck by an attack of the interesting. Her books of the year are a diary of

a Hollywood gofer and an opera history primer. She's lucky that those proving the aisles of one of Britain's busiest bookstores do not take their book choices quite so seriously.

Some five million people are served each year by various John Menzies outlets in the south terminal at Gatwick Airport, and Darrell Blake is the man in charge of making sure they find something to buy. He reads

voraciously – so what is his pick of the year? "I would choose 48 by James Herbert. It's his first non-horror tale. How can I describe it and not give it away? Let's just say there is a plague, and not many survivors. When I ask shopper Michael Twobey for his book of the year, he quickly puts *The Horse Whisperer* back on the shelf and starts apologising. "I'm reading a lot of

popular novels now as opposed to literature," he says. "My book of the year would probably be Ken Follet's *Night Over Water*. It's a very nice piece of work." Mr Twobey has been at Cambridge getting a doctorate in Chinese politics, and his holiday reading is a Tom Clancy techno-thriller. He also mentions Proust. Mitch McRoberts is a poet and novelist who has appeared on two "best of" lists. "It's

important to be as honest as you can and not to give books written by best friends," he says. "The problem is having to choose only a few." I press her for a popular choice: "I read thrillers for fun. The latest Michael Dibden was very good." Georgina Sims might agree. She is found at Menzies in possession of a Ruth Rendell and admits to a passion for mystery.

Her book of the year is *The Bad Place* by Dean Kootz. "I just like him. He gets a bit wacky, but at other times it gets quite intense and very frightening. I like being frightened when I'm reading books." Ms Sims is a midwife from Sutton in Surrey. Carmen Calli believes that I have called with an agenda. "I'm not sitting in with your theory, I'm afraid. Perhaps what you're complaining about is the people they ask. They may not have read books such as *Popcorn* by Ben Elton, or *Terry Pratchett*. I loved both of them but I'm afraid I was asked to give one or two books, not 20."

There are a few books – and *Popcorn* is one – that bridge the gap between popular and literary works. Authors include Kate Atkinson, Fay Weldon, Margaret Atwood and Beryl Bainbridge. It can work the other way – *Wild Swans* was mentioned first as a book of the year before catching on with the public.

Back at Gatwick, names for "favourite of the year" include Bill Bryson, Wilbur Smith and something titled *The Education of a Little Tree* by a native American called Forest Carter. A few people say they do not read enough to have a favourite. I wave a "pick of the year" list and ask if this provides any guidance. "I haven't read a book in a while," says one man who is a clinical researcher, "but it's been even longer since I read a book review." And we all blush together.

**LEFT TO DIE**

"Cristina is six but has the body of a baby. Other little girls have the wrinkled faces of old women. Their matchstick limbs are covered in open sores."

Tanya Barron on visiting Hinceni Orphanage

**Help End The Suffering of Moldova's Forgotten Orphanage Children**

At Hinceni Orphanage filthy, starving children lie in rows waiting to die. Nearly 25% died last winter. Around 10,000 children are in institutions.

They eat slops and sleep under threadbare blankets. They have no hot water, no heating, no medicine and up to 100 on one hope.

The European Children's Trust, sister charity of The Romanian Orphanage Trust, is working flat-out to get help through to the orphanages, starting with Hinceni.

Your gift today will save lives and bring hope

- £25 could buy emergency food supplements for two children to stop them dying from starvation.
- £50 could buy a medicine box containing antiseptic, antibiotics, vitamins, pain killers and life-saving drugs to help treat five children.
- £250 could buy heaters, blankets, food supplements, soap and a medical pack to help save eight children.

Call 01273 299333 or cut the coupon now

☐ I will give £ (Cheque to The European Children's Trust) to save the lives of orphanage children in Moldova.

£250 becomes £310 through the Government's Gift Aid Scheme, meaning we can help more children at no extra cost to you.

Mr/Ms/Ms  
Address  
Postcode  
Tel No  
I will give by Access/Visa/CAF Card  
Signature  
Date  
Return to: Tanya Barron, MOLDOVA APPEAL 608, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST, 21 Garlick Hill, London EC4A 3AR. Registered Charity No 104827

Please act now – winter is coming



# business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098  
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Lewis makes abrupt exit from Granada

Matthew Horsman  
Media Editor

Duncan Lewis, the chief executive of Granada Media Group, has left the company with immediate effect, following a series of disagreements with group chief executive Charles Allen and Gerry Robinson, the chairman.

His departure immediately led to speculation that he would join Cable & Wireless Communications, the new cable television and telephony group which includes Mercury, Mr Lewis's former company. C&W is actively seeking a chief executive for the group.

Neither Mr Lewis nor Granada, the hotels-to-television conglomerate, would comment in detail on his departure. In a curt statement, Granada said: "Both Duncan and Granada Group management have recognised an incompatibility of approaches and have therefore agreed to part on an amicable basis."

It is understood, however, that Mr Lewis felt the main group management, headed by Mr Robinson and Mr Allen, were not committed enough to the media side of the business, and that there had been disagreements about acquisition strategy.

Mr Lewis left the Granada headquarters on Wednesday, following a meeting with Mr Allen. He has not returned since. He had been on a rolling one-year contract of £250,000 a year, which is expected to be bought out.

A spokesman for Granada said that Mr Lewis's appointment had been "a brave experiment" that had gone wrong. Added a company insider: "He didn't know anything about television, and it showed."

Granada denied there had been any basic disagreement over strategy. "In a company such as this, there has to be good relations between group and the divisions," the spokesman said. "For some time, it was clear things were not going well."

Added a senior broadcasting executive within the group: "Television requires creativity, and the ability to get along with creative people."

It is understood that Granada's senior executives were also concerned about Mr Lewis's management style, which some have styled too "showy". As well, he is believed to have spent as much as £500,000 on developing strategy papers for the media group, an amount that was viewed as head office as excessive.

There were suggestions last night that Mr Lewis had wanted to invest aggressively, and had looked at joint venture production in the US. City-TV stations in Britain and other operations in continental Europe. To date, most of Granada's TV investments have been confined to the ITV sector.



'Insufficiently committed to media': Charles Allen

Some of his past colleagues have said Mr Lewis was "mercenary" and lacked focus. At Granada, his short tenure was marked by several rows with Mr Robinson and Mr Allen, who used to run the television business before rising to chief executive.

Mr Allen, the dour Scot who acts as the details man to Gerry Robinson's more flamboyant strategist, was understood to have been particularly uncomfortable with Mr Lewis. Granada declined to comment on suggestions that the two had a furious row on the day Mr Lewis left the building.

Mr Lewis, 45, moved from BT to Cable & Wireless, where he rose to become chief executive of Mercury, a job he held for only nine months. His departure was said to have followed disagreements with management.

He had been a surprise choice for the job at Granada, where he oversaw the company's television interests. Granada owns the Granada and London Weekend Television franchises, 27 per cent of Yorkshire-Tyne Tees, and 60 per cent of Granada Sky Broadcasting, a joint satellite TV joint venture with Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB.

Mr Lewis's replacement is Steve Morrison, a long-serving Granada executive, who became managing director of Granada Media Group earlier this year when the operations were restructured.

"Morrison is a far more logical choice for a company like Granada," a media analyst said. At the time of his appointment, Mr Lewis said he would bring his knowledge of telecommunications to the media business, in recognition of greater convergence in the sector between "content" and "carriage".



Heading for pastures new: The industry is betting that Duncan Lewis could be planning a job with Cable & Wireless Communications which is looking for a chief executive.

## Lang gives Northern green light

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Tan Lang, President of the Board of Trade, yesterday gave a green light to a final wave of takeover bids for the few remaining independent regional electricity companies, by deciding not to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the £782m hostile bid by US-owned CE Electric for Northern Electric.

The decision was greeted with relief by several City analysts who had predicted an MMC investigation and sent shares in all five remaining independent RECs soaring. Northern's share price jumped by almost 7 per cent, from 602.5p to 642p, just short of CE Electric's raised 650p all-cash offer.

Shares in the three remaining independent RECs which are not subject to takeover bids also surged ahead, with London Electricity rising 28p to 679.5p, Southern Electric adding 27p to 774.5p and Yorkshire Electricity jumping by 13.5p to 756p.

The decision also makes government approval of the agreed £1.3bn takeover bid by US utility Dominion Resources for East Midlands Electricity almost certain. Sources said it would be inconceivable that Mr Lang would refer the Dominion bid to the MMC after having given the go-ahead for the bid for Northern. East Midlands' shares were up 30p to 656.5p, compared with Dominion's cash offer of 670p.

Some leading City investors had also expected an MMC referral on the basis of recent surprise decisions by Mr Lang, including his ruling blocking bids for South West Water by rival water companies.

There was speculation last night that other US utilities would make bids for RECs early in the new year, with the industry facing a complete carve-up before the general election. One analyst suggested Entergy, the New Orleans utility, could renew exploratory discussions with London Electricity.

Yorkshire Electricity last night denied it had received any bid approaches. A spokesman said: "We are not in any talks with anybody. We've been asked the same question for the past 18 months and there's always been the same answer."

It has also paid £6.6m in fees to lawyers, accountants and auditors. Some £5m will be split between City law firm Linklaters & Paines and accountancy firm Pricewaterhouse, who led an internal inquiry into Wickes' accounts.

Last month the Metropolitan Police and Serious Fraud Office began a formal investigation into unnamed former Wickes' directors. Wickes does not expect the inquiry to result in any liability for the group.

Wickes said the total pay bill for directors in the year to December 1995 was £3.85m.

the US power generator which is CE Electric's biggest shareholder, has debts of around £2bn (£1.2bn) and has been frequently quizzed about its debt rating.

Northern's chances of finding off the bid were helped yesterday as another leading City investor came out in support of the company's existing management, led by chairman David Morris. Foreign & Colonial which holds 1.5 per cent of Northern shares, gave the bid its backing. David Manning, F&C director, explained: "We believe that the current bid for Northern falls well short of a fair value for the company. Northern has delivered on all its promises to date and we feel we should support them in rejecting the final offer."

The Prudential, Northern's biggest shareholder, also pledged to continue supporting the existing management, having raised its stake in the company slightly this week to 11.35 per cent. A spokesman explained: "Our decision was based on our perception of value in the company and this was clearly unaffected by the announcement."

Northern also claimed that another big, but unnamed investor with more than 2 per cent of the company was throwing its weight behind management.

David Sokol, chief executive of CalEnergy, is thought to be meeting the Prudential on Monday in a final lobbying campaign before the Friday 20 December deadline. Mr Sokol insisted his offer remained fair, despite the rise in Northern's share price: "If our offer fails then Northern's shares will head back to the 494p price before we launched the bid."

One obstacle could be Northern's vocal band of small shareholders which controls a total of some 21 per cent of the company.

Chris Foote Wood from the Northern Small Shareholders Association said he would fight to the bitter end to keep Northern independent.

CalEnergy, the industry regulator, said it would support the bid for Northern.

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## Rolls 'confident' of disposing of Parsons plant

Chris Godsmark

Rolls-Royce yesterday insisted it remained confident of selling its Parsons steam turbine business despite announcing up to 800 redundancies at the plant. In what the company described as a "precautionary statement", it said around 400 jobs would go in late January or early February as work at the factory on North Tyneside dries up. A further 400 staff could be laid off if negotiations with companies interested in buying all or part of the operation are not swiftly concluded.

Unions said Parsons' 1,500 remaining employees were shocked by the news, which had come after the management had been giving the workforce more optimistic signals about the continuing discussions with outside bidders.

Barney McGill, the works representative for the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said: "The workers here were stunned by the announcement. In the run-up to Christmas this is a severe blow for those involved and the scale of the redundancies were definitely unexpected. However, we've come a long way since the original announcement by Rolls-Royce back in July and we are probably more

optimistic that the company can be sold than a few weeks ago."

Rolls had given all the staff protective redundancy notices early last month to comply with employment law which stipulates that workers must be given 90 days' notice before losing their jobs.

Since the decision to sell or close Parsons the plant has not been bidding for new orders. One reason for the job cuts is that work has been coming to a close on one of the last big contracts, to make turbines for a 110 megawatt gas-fired power station under construction in Godavari in India.

It also emerged that a much higher Indian contract, to build a huge coal-fired station at Balaghar, had fallen through. Rolls said it had withdrawn from bidding for the work after deciding to leave the heavy power generation business.

Last night the company insisted it remained "fairly confident" that it could sell Parsons. Rolls-Royce has made provisions of £250m for the possible closure of the business, along with a boiler plant at Rolls-Royce International Combustion in Derby which employs 900. But experts have cast doubt on the chances of selling Parsons in an industry which has huge overcapacity.

## £1m payout for Wickes directors

Patrick Toohar

The new chief executive and finance director of Wickes, the do-it-yourself retailer whose former bosses are being investigated for fraud, have been awarded salary and options package valued at more than £1m each.

Wickes has also spent more than £10m in fees to professional advisers in the last six months since discovering past profits linked to supplier rebates had been overstated by £51m.

The details are contained in a document sent yesterday to Wickes' shareholders urging them to accept a deeply discounted £53.2m rescue rights issue or risk the crisis-hit company going into receivership.

Of particular interest are provisions for "golden parachute" payments if Wickes loses its independence. Analysts say Wickes has been so weakened by the discovery of the serious accounting irregularities that it is a sitting duck for a £200m takeover.

Bill Grimsey, who was appointed chief executive last month, stands to earn a bonus of £230,000 if Wickes is taken over by August 1997 or his employment is terminated within a year of such an event. Bill Hoskins, Wickes' finance director, will get £200,000 under a similar arrangement.

The document also shows that Mr Grimsey received a special payment of £115,000 "in recognition of the exceptional services he has provided in the group since July 1995". Mr Hoskins got £100,000 for his recent efforts.

Mr Grimsey is on a one-year rolling contract paying £230,000 a year and has share options valued at £60,000, while Mr Hoskins is also entitled to share options worth three times his annual salary of £190,000.

The exercise price of both sets of options is performance-related, but it could be set at the shares' closing price on the day before a bid is made for Wickes.

Trading in Wickes' shares was suspended at 6p in June after the accounting scam came to light, forcing the resignation of £1m-a-year chairman Henry Sweetbaum. Seven other directors have since left.

Dealings in the company's shares will resume on 7 January if shareholders approve a one-for-one rights issue, which has been fully underwritten by SBC Warburg at the equivalent of 15p a share, a £100m capital

reduction and new banking facilities of £52m.

Wickes said the rights issue will cost it £3.5m in expenses, including a standard underwriting commission of 2 per cent equal to £1.35m.

It has also paid £6.6m in fees to lawyers, accountants and auditors. Some £5m will be split between City law firm Linklaters & Paines and accountancy firm Pricewaterhouse, who led an internal inquiry into Wickes' accounts.

Last month the Metropolitan Police and Serious Fraud Office began a formal investigation into unnamed former Wickes' directors. Wickes does not expect the inquiry to result in any liability for the group.

Wickes said the total pay bill for directors in the year to December 1995 was £3.85m.

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## Triplex Lloyd castigates Cook's salary

Patrick Toohar

Triplex Lloyd, the Midlands-based engineering bidding £58m for steel castings group William Cook, yesterday launched a withering personal attack on Andrew Cook, its controversial chairman and chief executive.

In a letter to Cook's shareholders, Triplex seized on Mr Cook's five-year rolling contract, which has seen him earn more than £500,000, or up to 11 per cent of William Cook's profits, in each of the last four years.

"Andrew Cook's remuneration package has performed much better than your company's share price," said Graham Lockyer, Triplex's chief executive. "Poor corporate governance at William Cook is so extreme that it is not an esoteric debate. It is a monetary issue which has had, and without Triplex Lloyd's offer will continue to have, an adverse impact on shareholder value."

Triplex highlighted Mr Cook's service contract, which entitles him to a Bentley Turbo

and a Land Rover Discovery, both of which can be replaced every two years by a new car of the same model.

Mr Cook is also the only director employed by William Cook and is entitled to retire on a full pension at the age of 55. William Cook has no finance director on its board. The other four directors are all engaged as self-employed consultants.

Mr Lockyer pointed out that of the two non-executive directors, one is 71 and the other, aged 83, has sat on Cook's

board for 41 years. Mr Cook, who recently described his £1.5m "golden parachute" as a "pittance", has promised to sharpen up his corporate governance act by announcing plans to split the role of chairman and chief executive and to appoint at least one new non-executive director if the Triplex Lloyd bid lapses.

William Cook is expected next week to quantify its forecast of a "substantial improvement" in profits for the year to March 1997.

## Banks Target cheaper euro payment system

Peter Rodgers  
Financial Editor

A group of international banks announced plans yesterday for a payments system in the new euros that will provide a cheaper alternative to the controversial Target clearing system.

Target has been at the centre of a blazing row during the preparations for monetary union, because France and Germany want the system to discriminate against banks from countries that stay out of the single currency.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, has been campaigning for better treatment for British banks that use Target if the UK does stay out of EMU. But he made clear in September that if the obstacles to using Target to process payments between banks are too great there will be alternatives available.

The ECU Banking Association, which represents 49 of the world's largest banks including Deutsche Bank and Union Bank of Switzerland, said it had decided at a meeting in Luxembourg, chaired by Ashley Downson of Barclays Bank, to proceed with what it called a "truly European cross-border payment system for EMU".

The cost will be less than one euro per payment compared with five to seven euros which the EBA claimed would be the cost for Target.

The EBA system makes transfers of money within one day, so there could be tremendous disruption if a bank fails during the hours a transaction is waiting to be completed within the system. The Bank of England's greatest concern in the row over Target is that it will discourage commercial banks from using the safest system.

cost for Target. A report prepared for the Luxembourg meeting said the EBA system should be capable of reaching a market share of 30 per cent, half as much again as Target.

A third system in which banks would use correspondent banks in other countries to process their payments was expected to reach a similar market share to Target of 20 per cent.

The EBA claimed its new system, which will be developed from an existing computerised clearing system for euros, would be complementary to Target.

It could become the main payment system for cross-border commercial and financial payments in Euros, while Target was designed for monetary policy transactions and very high value or urgent wholesale payments.

The difference between the two systems, and the main reason the EBA's is cheaper, is that Target settles transactions instantly, eliminating the risk that a failure of one bank could have a knock-on effect on others.

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STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low
FTSE 100	3990.70	+8.20	+0.2	4073.10	3632.30
FTSE 250	4379.50	+12.70	+0.3	4568.60	4015.30
FTSE 350	1983.10	+4.40	+0.2	2022.10	1616.60
FTSE SmallCap	2138.67	+1.25	+0.1	2244.36	1954.06
FTSE All-Share	1956.25	+1.11	+0.2	1994.54	1791.95
New York	6303.11	-88.61	-1.5	6547.79	5032.94
Tokyo	20501.20	-67.18	-0.3	22666.80	19734.70
Hong Kong	n/a	n/a	n/a	10204.87	7131
Frankfurt	2647.08	+6.03	+0.2	2909.91	2253.36

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling*	UK medium gilt	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields*	
1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%) Year Ago
UK 6.03	6.88	7.08	7.39	7.76	7.56
US 5.72	5.66	6.37	5.74	6.51	6.06
Japan 0.28	0.47	2.47	2.64	-	-
Germany 3.22	3.25	5.93	6.04	6.82	6.53

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
£ (London)	1.6582	+0.28c	1.5382	£ (London)	0.9031
£ (NY)	1.6570	+0.37c	1.5430	£ (NY)	0.9059
DM (London)	2.5801	+0.83c	2.2121	DM (London)	1.5439
¥ (London)	187.865	+11.11p	156.20	¥ (London)	113.366
₹ (India)	83.1	+0.2	83.0	₹ (India)	97.9

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent \$	22.52	+0.37	18.06	RPI	183.9+2.7pc
Gold \$	388.80	+0.20	386.15	GDP	109.9+2.3pc
Gold £	222.41	-0.21	250.88	Base Rates	-6.00pc

Lopez st  
GM secr  
court to

Halifax raises

Spot Rates





JEREMY WARNER

# Don't hold your breath over Guinness report

So finally, finally, after all these years, the Department of Trade and Industry is to publish its report on the Guinness scandal. It might actually do so as early as next week, although the DTI was yesterday casting doubt on whether it could be ready quite so soon. The spark for this belated little act of public service is next Tuesday's ruling by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg on whether Ernest Saunders, the former Guinness chairman, was unfairly tried over the Guinness shares fraud.

Whatever the judges have to say on the matter, the DTI takes the view that it is now free to publish the results of its 10-year investigation of how Guinness illegally won control of Distillers in the mid-1980s. Conspiracy theorists will believe the timing is dictated by the Government's desire to deflect attention from what is all too likely to be another slap in the face for British justice from the European courts. Europe might wish to say, or at least imply, that Mr Saunders and others didn't get a fair trial, but this report will claim in the strongest possible language that he is as guilty as sin. The Serious Fraud Office will fight tooth and nail to uphold the Guinness convictions, whatever the European court says.

I've followed the various twists and turns in the Guinness affair pretty closely over the years, but unfortunately I haven't yet been able to get my hands on a copy of the final

version of this report. However, from reasonably well informed gossip and an earlier unpublished draft it is possible to surmise roughly what's in it. Don't hold your breath.

Ten years after the event and with numerous criminal and civil trials to sift the evidence, there isn't a great deal of the inspectors can say which is genuinely new about this affair. The Guinness scandal has passed into history and that's what the report is – a history book. There are no significant changes in the law, corporate governance or City practice the inspectors can recommend, for the lessons have been largely learnt and generally acted upon, in so far as they ever can be.

It is, of course, the case that the inspectors can still pass judgement on individuals and organisations still alive and kicking – and they will – but it isn't going to surprise anyone to learn that Mr Saunders is a crook or that Morgan Grenfell, his City advisers at the time, disregarded accepted rules and practices.

From what I hear about this report, however, the inspectors have missed an opportunity. In their analysis, evidence and judgement, they mirror very closely the prosecution case aired in the various criminal proceedings. Broadly, this attempts to pin blame for the scandal on a small group of key people and to varying degrees on the organisations they represented.

The central allegation is that led by Mr Saunders they conspired with another illegally to support the Guinness share price and that this was kept secret not only from the markets (for the trick would not have worked if everyone had known the share price was being artificially supported), but also everybody else at Guinness and its professional advisers. Ergo these are the culpable ones and everyone else – lawyers, accountants, City advisers and the like – is in the clear. Indeed the case goes rather further than that, for to work properly – as it plainly did in the first Guinness trial – it needs you to believe that no one outside this inner core had any conception of what was going on. Moreover, they would have been profoundly shocked and tried to stop it had they known.

I've never believed this to be the full picture. It is largely true but the real story is more complicated – that the Guinness affair took place against a well established backdrop of cavalier practice and behaviour that encouraged the main protagonists into believing that if this was not quite the accepted way of doing things it was common enough at least to be tolerated. In some City firms practice of this sort was endemic, going unchecked either by internal controls or outside regulators.

I'm not saying here that any of the professionals caught up in the Guinness affair

knew what was going on or even that they should have been officiously running around the place saying there's something wrong here and we are going to find out about it. No one ever starts in these situations from the point of view that their client is a crook nor is it their job to act as watchdogs over the activities of others.

All the same, it seems astonishing that nobody suspected what was going on. At the very least they should have been more vigorous in their approach. In the cut and thrust of a contested takeover anything goes out to keep things in check. Even after DTI inspectors were sent into Guinness the atmosphere among some remained one of relaxed complacency right up to the moment when the full enormity of the scandal emerged. Then everyone ran for cover.

The Ernest Saunders version of events, that all these professionals knew what was going on and conspired to pin the whole saga on him, is absurd. But with so many highly paid, top-drawer names around the table to advise and guide him, it is hard to understand how this could have been allowed to happen, even now, ten years after the event. There won't be much of this in the DTI report, however. The possibility that the whole thing might have been avoided had a more vigorous and professional approach

been adopted is simply not addressed. This is a shame for it might have led to a more rounded and illuminating report. The inspectors were in a position to tackle the question of whether the night watchman was asleep on the job. They appear to have decided not to.

Nobody should be too surprised by the spectacle of Duncan Lewis flouncing out of his Granada TV job so soon after joining. Incompatibility seems to be his middle name. He did much the same thing when he was at Cable & Wireless Mercury Communications subsidiary. He lasted barely more than a year there too. Gerry Robinson and Charles Allen are hard taskmasters, applying a vigorous regime of management control and accountability throughout the Granada empire. In never seemed very likely that they would be able to work happily with Mr Lewis.

He'll claim that he was never allowed the money or flexibility to do what he wanted with Granada's television interests. They'll claim he couldn't run a... That's what happens when you get a difference of approach in business. The real problem, I suspect, is that Mr Lewis wants to be his own boss. He wasn't, either at Mercury or Granada. Mr Lewis is the type of executive who needs to be running his own show.

## Lopez stole GM secrets, court told

Imre Karacs  
Bonn

The former head of purchasing at General Motors, Jose Ignacio Lopez de Arriortua, systematically stole trade secrets from the company as part of a premeditated act hatched several months before he jumped ship for Volkswagen, German prosecutors claimed yesterday.

The allegations came as Mr Lopez was formally indicted on charges of industrial espionage by the prosecutor's office in Darmstadt, near Frankfurt.

Charged alongside Mr Lopez were three other former GM executives who defected to VW: Jose Manuel Gutierrez, Jorge Alvarez and Rosario Pizarra.

However, the prosecutors said that their investigation had found no evidence that VW's chief executive, Ferdinand Piech, or anyone else from the German car maker was involved in the alleged espionage. Gerhard Andres, the chief public prosecutor, said more serious charges of fraud were not filed because no measurable amount of financial damage to GM could be determined.

But referring to Mr Lopez and the other indicted executives, he said: "The accused planned to acquire business

documents from the research, planning, production, and purchasing departments with a view toward their planned joint move to VW." This had been premeditated and planned months ahead.

Mr Lopez, head of purchasing for GM's European subsidiary Opel had revolutionised the car maker's relationship with suppliers, preparing the ground for cheaper production.

He was first approached by Mr Piech in November 1992. Following their meeting, Mr Lopez and three of his closest colleagues began rifling through GM's confidential documents.

In March 1993 Mr Lopez informed GM that he was leaving, whereupon he was offered a promotion, which he gratefully accepted. A few days later, however, Mr Piech trumped the counter-offer, and Mr Lopez this time handed GM his final letter of resignation and took the first plane to Germany.

At VW headquarters in Wolfsburg, the GM defectors set themselves up in offices enclaved in a bubble of hi-tech security. Their mission was to develop the concept for an assembly plant codenamed "B" in the Spanish Basque country.

The factory would be the embodiment of all Lopez prin-



Eye of the storm: German prosecutors Thomas Seifert (left) and Gerhard Andres during their announcement in Darmstadt yesterday of a criminal indictment charging the former VW executive Jose Ignacio Lopez and three associates with the theft of GM secrets when they defected from General Motors in 1993. Photograph: Herbert Propper/AP

ciples combined: cars would be slotted together from "modules". Under this system components as before, and fitted on the assembly line largely by workers employed by outside contractors at cheaper rates.

Only one such factory existed elsewhere in the world, and even then only in blueprint form: the hush-hush "Plant X" designed by GM and also destined for northern Spain. These are the very plans that Mr Lopez is said to have stolen.

In addition to these plans the Darmstadt prosecutors claim that the four accused also pilched suppliers' price lists, cost information on virtually the entire GM-Opel range in Eu-

rope, and documents outlining GM's cost-cutting strategy for 1992.

If convicted, Mr Lopez could face a five-year prison term, though as a first offender he would probably escape with a hefty fine.

Lawyers acting for Mr Lopez challenged the prosecutors' findings, saying they had mistaken documents that GM had previously made public for company secrets and that many of their witnesses were not credible. Jurgen Taschke and Eberhard Wahle, representing Mr Lopez, said the charges would not stand up in court and they would seek to have them dismissed.

### Key dates in the Lopez affair

- 1986 - Lopez joins GM Spain
- Nov 92 - Lopez appointed head of purchasing at Opel
- Nov 92 - Lopez has first meeting with Ferdinand Piech, chairman of VW
- Mar 93 - Lopez joins VW as head of purchasing, then quits to become president of GM North America, which he then quits after a few days to join VW
- Apr 93 - Opel starts legal action against Lopez for industrial espionage
- 8 Mar 96 - GM files civil suit in America against VW for criminal conspiracy
- 13 May - VW sues GM for defamation
- 26 Nov - US judge in Detroit rules GM can pursue claim for damages
- 29 Nov - Lopez resigns from VW, but is rehired immediately as a consultant
- 13 Dec - Lopez and three other former executives formally indicted by German prosecutors

## Halifax raises mortgage rate

Bill Treanor  
Banking Correspondent

Halifax Building Society, the largest mortgage lender in the UK, finally raised its standard variable mortgage rate to 7.25 per cent yesterday, two weeks after its rivals acted on the quarter percentage point rise in base rates announced in October.

The move will allow the society to raise its savings rates in the new year when competition to who savers is expected to hot up when several leading building societies plan to convert to banks, unleashing a £17bn windfall for investors.

Alliance & Leicester was the first of the big societies to increase mortgage rates earlier this month. But Halifax decided to hold off until this week's monthly meeting between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England before instigating its first rate rise since February 1995.

The move comes amid growing evidence that the housing market is staging a recovery and shows the need to increase the rates on offer to savers, who have lost out in the race among building societies and banks to win mortgage business.

"We always have to balance

the interests of our borrowers and savers whilst continuing to remain competitive in the market. The recovery in the housing market continues and over the last two years borrowers have benefited from low interest rates and low mortgage payments," said Mike Blackburn, chief executive of Halifax.

The rate rise by Halifax allowed Nationwide, the largest remaining building society, to yesterday increase its standard variable mortgage rate by a quarter of a point to 6.99 per cent – which is still a quarter of a point below that offered by the large lenders.

## Oxford Biomedica's debut flops

Magnus Grimond

Stock market jitters hammered another two new issues yesterday when Oxford Biomedica shares opened at less than half their placing price and it emerged that Fountain Forestry was cutting by 50 per cent the amount being raised from its own Alternative Investment Market flotation.

Oxford, a biotechnology group backed by Oxford University, saw its shares start dealing on AIM at just 42.5p yesterday morning, some 52 per cent below the 89p at which the shares were priced in October.

They ended slightly up at 47.5p. Sentiment took a dive earlier this week when it was revealed that the two main underwriters, Stockton Trading, a Bahamian-registered company, and Kaj Kjellquist, a private Swedish investor, had withdrawn their combined £5m commitment to underwrite the £6.15m then being raised. The move forced the company to delay first dealings until yesterday and reduce the amount being raised to £5m, which Oxford said was its minimum working capital requirement, although it had originally sought up to £11m.

Percy Lomax of sponsoring

brokers Teather & Greenwood said the company was reserving its right to take legal action against the underwriters, whose actions were the main cause of the "appalling" opening price. The flop is the latest in a list of disappointing biotechnology flotations. Earlier this year, Cambrio abandoned plans to float, and Xenova has been forced to cut the amount being raised by £2.4m to £22.6m. The news came as Fountain Forestry, which manages 80,000 hectares of forest and clears leaves from railway lines, said its placing would raise £2.3m, half the original target of £4.5m.

### IN BRIEF

#### Swiss operator picks BT as partner

British Telecom yesterday further strengthened its network of European alliances after it was selected as one of the international partners for Switzerland's second licensed telecoms operator Newtelco. BT and Tele Danmark will acquire a significant minority stake in Newtelco, which was set up earlier this year by Swiss Federal Railways, Union Bank of Switzerland and Migros-Genossenschaftsbund, the country's largest retailer.

#### Foster's settles forex action

Foster's Brewing Group of Australia has agreed to settle its civil action over alleged fraudulent foreign exchange deals against John Elliott, the former chief executive, and others. The others that are covered by the settlement are former executives Peter Scanlon, Ken Biggins and Ken Jarrett, the Bank of New Zealand and auditor Price Waterhouse. "The terms of the settlement... remain confidential," said Foster's, which had sued Messrs Elliott, Scanlon and Biggins in a bid to recover A\$66.5m (£32m) allegedly lost in fraudulent foreign exchange transactions in 1988.

#### Toad motors towards full listing

Toad, the car gadgets group founded by Chris Evans, the biotechnology tycoon, is tapping the market for £7.1m in a five-for-nine open offer at 80p, and moving to a full listing. The company, currently quoted on the Alternative Investment Market, said it wanted to spend £1.35m opening another five or six offices to add to the existing 17. Interim losses deepened from £801,000 to £2.46m, but Toad is forecasting profits in the year to March 1998.

#### Burnfield to pay £24m for Ling

Burnfield has reached agreement to acquire Ling Dynamic Systems Limited for £24m. Ling designs and makes vibration testing equipment used by the aerospace, electronics and automotive industries. The acquisition will be financed mainly by a £20.3m, seven-for-10 rights issue at 90p per share. Ling made pre-tax profits of £2.3m in the year ended 31 July. Burnfield forecasts operating profit for the year ending 31 December will be not less than £3.5m.

#### John Lewis sales ahead 13 per cent

John Lewis Partnership said total sales for the 19 weeks to 7 December were 11 per cent ahead of the same period last year. Sales in John Lewis department stores were 12.9 per cent ahead while sales in Waitrose supermarkets showed a 11 per cent increase.

#### Ladbroke solves Hilton dispute

Ladbroke has reached an out-of-court settlement in a rent review dispute with the landlord of the Paris Hilton. The parties have been in litigation over the level of rent payable on the hotel since 1992. Under the settlement the annual charge for 1996 and each year to 2008 will be £47m (£5.5m), indexed annually for inflation. Separately, Ladbroke said it has sold the 400-room Washington Vista Hotel in Washington DC for \$47m (£23m), to Interstate Hotels.

#### Asda launches unisex perfume

Asda claimed it was the first supermarket to enter the premium perfume market yesterday when it launched its first fragrance, George I. The unisex scent is priced at £9.99, in a bid to undercut rivals such as Calvin Klein's CK.

#### Bunzl in talks to buy Filtrona

Bunzl is in discussions regarding the possible cash purchase of the bonded fibres business of American Filtrona, which is listed on Nasdaq. The bonded fibres business, which had sales of \$62.9m (£38m) and made operating profits of \$7.3m in 1995, manufactures and sells cigarette filters and ink reservoirs.

Statistics as of 13 December

### Foreign Exchange Rates

Currency	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.6582	1.67	1.67	1000	1.67	1.67	1.67
Canada	2.2508	2.25	2.25	1000	2.25	2.25	2.25
France	6.5510	6.55	6.55	1000	6.55	6.55	6.55
Italy	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Japan	1.3296	1.33	1.33	1000	1.33	1.33	1.33
ECU	1.3296	1.33	1.33	1000	1.33	1.33	1.33
Belgium	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Netherlands	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Spain	1.6582	1.67	1.67	1000	1.67	1.67	1.67
Sweden	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Switzerland	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Australia	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Hong Kong	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Malaysia	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
New Zealand	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Saudi Arabia	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03
Singapore	2.0337	2.03	2.03	1000	2.03	2.03	2.03

### Other Spot Rates

Country	Currency	Spot	1 month	3 months
Argentina	Argentine Peso	1.6582	1.67	1.67
Australia	Australian Dollar	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Brazil	Brazilian Real	2.0337	2.03	2.03
China	Chinese Yuan	2.0337	2.03	2.03
France	French Franc	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Germany	German Mark	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Greece	Greek Drachma	2.0337	2.03	2.03
India	Indian Rupee	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Italy	Italian Lira	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Japan	Japanese Yen	2.0337	2.03	2.03
South Africa	South African Rand	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Spain	Spanish Peseta	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Sweden	Swedish Krona	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Switzerland	Swiss Franc	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Taiwan	Taiwanese Dollar	2.0337	2.03	2.03
Thailand	Thai Baht	2.0337	2.03	2.03
UK	British Pound	2.0337	2.03	2.03
USA	US Dollar	2.0337	2.03	2.03

Forward rates quoted low to high are at a discount; high to low are at a premium. "Dollar rates quoted as percentages." For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 223 3033. Cable cost 50p per minute (daytime) 45p other times.

### Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	6.00%	Prime	8.75%
Discount	4.50%	Discount	8.00%
Overnight	3.25%	Overnight	8.00%
1 month	7.50%	1 month	8.00%
3 months	7.50%	3 months	8.00%
6 months	7.50%	6 months	8.00%
1 year	7.50%	1 year	8.00%

### Bond Yields

Country	10yr yield	10yr yield	10yr yield
UK	7.75%	7.75%	7.75%
Germany	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%
US	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%
Japan	8.75%	8.75%	8.75%
Australia	8.75%	8.75%	8.75%
France	6.00%	6.00%	6.00%

### Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Discount	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Overnight	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
1 month	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
3 months	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
6 months	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
1 year	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

### Tourist Rates

2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys
Australia (Pound)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Canada (Dollar)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
France (Franc)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Germany (Mark)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Italy (Lira)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Japan (Yen)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Spain (Peseta)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Sweden (Krona)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Switzerland (Franc)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Taiwan (Dollar)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
Thailand (Baht)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
UK (Pound)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337
USA (Dollar)	2.0337	2.0337	2.0337

### Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Settlement price	Open interest
Long Call (Dec 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put (Dec 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put (Dec 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Call (Dec 97)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### Life FTSE Index Option

Settlement price	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00
Long Call (Dec 97)	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00
Short Put (Dec 97)	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00
Long Put (Dec 97)	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00
Short Call (Dec 97)	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00

### Energy

Jan									
Feb	59/55	129/72	84/81	69/16	..				
Mar	77/75	137/82	109/10	81/37	..				

Energy										
Brent Crude		(\$/barrel)	Gas oil (\$/tonne)		WTI	Products †			(\$/tonne)	
IPE	530pm	*ch/y Yr ago	IPE	close	*ch/y	6pm	Spot	CF	NW Europe	
Jan	22.35	-0.23	15.50	Dec	205.00	+2.25	Jan	23.60	Unleaded Gasoline	293/215
Feb	21.67	-0.45	15.50	Jan	203.25	+0.25	Feb	23.05	Heavy Fuel Oil	194/115











## sport

## Dettori story finds the going good

Only those who have pitched their tent in close proximity to a Shining Path guerrilla encampment recently will be unaware that Frankie Dettori's autobiography is on the shelves.

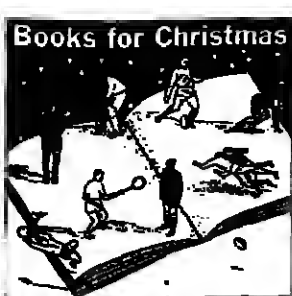
If there is a television programme that does not feature either Jill Dando or racing's laughing boy at the moment it must be on just after the millennium has risen. Dettori's ubiquity (he has appeared on *Top Of The Pops*, *The Big Breakfast*, *Smilie's People* and *Clive Anderson All Talk* among others) is explained by the publication of his life work in the age of 25.

This book was to have followed the format of those reliably terrible turf diaries and charted the path of a personality over a season's span. However, when Dettori was ejected by Shaheen at Newbury in June it may have hurt his elbow but it did no harm to *A Year In The Life Of Frankie Dettori* (Heinemann, £15.99) as the Italian was forced to investigate other areas. Thus we get a flavour of the teenager's spartan early days in Newmarket, though there is less discussion about another taste, for Dettori, which an amateur Dettori sampled in 1992.

The main criticism of the book, as it is with most turf biographies, is that there is a oodles of attitude in dwelling when it comes to reflection on misdemeanours and mistakes. Nevertheless, given the popularity of the career and the fact that the book is just about all his own work, there is much to believe in the assertion of Dettori's management that the book is going well.

Michael Kinane has, on the other hand, had a relatively barren season leading up to his authorised biography. Nevertheless, Michael Kinane has done well to get a book out of a jockey who speaks as frequently as Pinocchio before Geygo got his chisel out.

*Mick Kinane Big Race King* (Mainstream, £15.99) concerns a man who has reached the same heights as Dettori without a trace of the same level of enjoyment. The most compelling sections of this effort come



**Books for Christmas**  
Richard Edmondson examines the latest literary offerings from jockeys, journalists and bookmakers

when Kinane analyses his own character and manner. The jockey dangles himself from his own mouth and occasionally sounds like the sort of bloke with whom you would not like to survive a shipwreck.

Timing has also been of the essence with David Ashforth, whose *Hitting The Turf* (Headline, £14.99) is available just after the Italian's deserved recognition as the racing writer of the year. This book is vaguely autobiographical and probably sharply distressing for the writer's family. Ashforth revels in his role as one of Britain's most serious unprofessional punters.

The sketches he provides are well-observed and, most importantly, in a sport that churns out enough romantic junk to fill Becher's Brook, they are real. It is quite simply the best racing book for some time.

Christmas is also the time when Graham Sharpe, William Hill's media relations manager, churns out one of his compilation books. Mrs Sharpe must get very annoyed with all those slivers of paper left behind the fence all year as hubby snips items that tickle him from the national press. *Odds, Sods And Racing Cents* (Robson Books, £14.95) has been done before, but it does possess the single greatest attribute this writer can think of. I'm in it.



Fab Five: Muhammad Ali meets the Beatles in Miami in February 1964. Ali was preparing for his fight against Sonny Liston. The Beatles had just appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show for the first time. The photograph, by UPI/Bettmann is taken from Muhammad Ali: In Perspective by Thomas Hauser, published by Collins, £14.99

## Varying accounts of the life of Jacques the lad

Jacques Villeneuve's dramatic impact on Formula One is about to be reflected in a race for book buyers. The in-house, glossy, lavishly illustrated offering is out of the pits ahead of the publication that has got the driver's camp hot under the collar. *The New Villeneuve* by Tim Collings (Bloomsbury).

While Collings endeavours to reveal the "warts and all" story of Jacques the lad, Villeneuve's *My First Season In Formula One* (Collins Willow, £20) written for the Canadian driver by Gerald Donaldson, charts a safer course, "race by race to second place in the world championship

behind his Williams-Renault team-mate, Damon Hill.

Villeneuve represents the new generation in Formula One, a cavalier, unceremonious individual intent on conveying that very image. "I prefer people who are genuine and I try to be that myself," he says. "I wouldn't like to feel I was obliged to conform."

The 25-year-old former IndyCar champion has been enthusiastically embraced by some of the younger grand prix drivers. David Coulthard has welcomed him as a breath of fresh air, saying even Michael Schumacher has been charmed and influenced by him.

## Derick Allsop casts a critical eye over the best motor racing books

There is little doubt Villeneuve has earned Schumacher's respect. His combative style was spectacularly characterised by the manoeuvre which took him round and past the German's Ferrari in Portugal. Villeneuve had suggested to his crew he might employ the oval-style tactic, and was quickly on the radio to tell them: "You see, it worked!"

The respect between Villeneuve and Schumacher is mutual. "While some drivers tend to get flustered and make mis-

takes in close encounters, others, like Michael Schumacher, know exactly what they are doing," Villeneuve says. No direct comparison with Hill and, indeed, Villeneuve congratulates the Englishman on his "deserved" title success and portrays an excellent working relationship. And yet, you are left wondering. Another candidate for Formula One's Crazy Gang is Eddie Irvine, and with help from Marko Hammett, the Ulsterman recounts his first season

with Ferrari, as well as earlier days, in *Green Racer's Red* (Collins Willow, £14.99).

Irvine, too, can give the impression he works at being "natural". And, in common with other members of the gang, he does not have a particularly high regard for Hill. He is critical of the way Hill handled the ill-fated negotiations for a new contract with Williams, and agrees with those who feel he is no match for Schumacher. "Nobody in equal equipment could beat Schumacher. Their life is a couple of drivers who could take him on in slightly superior equipment, but even then, I don't think Damon is the man."

Irvine has taken a pragmatic approach to life as Schumacher's No. 2. He accepts it, just as he accepts his team-mate's pre-eminence. If, however, the Williams is still beyond reach next season and Heinz-Harald Frentzen handles the pressure, Irvine believes Frentzen "will walk it".

In *The Luck Of The Irish* (Patrick Stephens, £9.99), Adam Cooper, like Collings, develops his own picture without direct assistance from the driver concerned.

Derick Allsop's book, *Michael Schumacher: the Formula One Success* (Ebury Press, £17.99), will be reviewed in next Monday's sports section.

"We take keep y interested"

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## Summer jumping 'ridiculous'

Josh Gifford blamed summer jumping and moderate racing for the plethora of small fields after saddling Yorkshire Gale to win a two-horse race at Cheltenham yesterday. Gifford said fields will not improve while the racing programme, which now includes summer jumping, caters for moderate horses.

He said: "These races cut up because there are not enough good horses to go round and never will be while the powers-that-be look after moderate horses. If they stopped summer jumping, it would help racing in the autumn. Even in the days of Arkle there were three- or four-runner races, but the public came to watch because there were good horses to see."

"I've got Major Summit but nowhere to run him. He must either take on the big boys, which he is not ready for, or carry top weight in a handicap. There are not enough races to educate nice young quality horses. There are more horses than ever, but they are bad ones. My moderate horses have won more times this year because I can't find races for the better ones."

And he added: "Summer jumping is the most ridiculous thing to have happened to racing and, as for all-weather racing, who wants it? The jockeys cover their faces with masks but what about the poor old horses who have to suck in all the dirt and sand?"

## HYPERION

700 Super Chappy 750 Annap 800 Souperficial 8.30 High Premium 9.00 Potomac 9.30 Badge

GOING: Standard.  
SEATTLE 7.15 to 8.15 - outside test - inside.  
DRAW ADVANTAGE: high from 8.15 to 10.45.  
Pace: 10.45, 11.15, 11.45, 12.15, 12.45, 13.15, 13.45, 14.15, 14.45, 15.15, 15.45, 16.15, 16.45, 17.15, 17.45, 18.15, 18.45, 19.15, 19.45, 20.15, 20.45, 21.15, 21.45, 22.15, 22.45, 23.15, 23.45, 24.15, 24.45, 25.15, 25.45, 26.15, 26.45, 27.15, 27.45, 28.15, 28.45, 29.15, 29.45, 30.15, 30.45, 31.15, 31.45, 32.15, 32.45, 33.15, 33.45, 34.15, 34.45, 35.15, 35.45, 36.15, 36.45, 37.15, 37.45, 38.15, 38.45, 39.15, 39.45, 40.15, 40.45, 41.15, 41.45, 42.15, 42.45, 43.15, 43.45, 44.15, 44.45, 45.15, 45.45, 46.15, 46.45, 47.15, 47.45, 48.15, 48.45, 49.15, 49.45, 50.15, 50.45, 51.15, 51.45, 52.15, 52.45, 53.15, 53.45, 54.15, 54.45, 55.15, 55.45, 56.15, 56.45, 57.15, 57.45, 58.15, 58.45, 59.15, 59.45, 60.15, 60.45, 61.15, 61.45, 62.15, 62.45, 63.15, 63.45, 64.15, 64.45, 65.15, 65.45, 66.15, 66.45, 67.15, 67.45, 68.15, 68.45, 69.15, 69.45, 70.15, 70.45, 71.15, 71.45, 72.15, 72.45, 73.15, 73.45, 74.15, 74.45, 75.15, 75.45, 76.15, 76.45, 77.15, 77.45, 78.15, 78.45, 79.15, 79.45, 80.15, 80.45, 81.15, 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# Mouthbrowne has luck on his side

Ireland sends over serious representation for the main races of the day at Cheltenham this afternoon, though it is difficult to decipher whether they are there for the money or just a reconnaissance mission in advance of the Festival in March.

The developing economics of the countries separated by the Irish Sea mean that animals from the land of Arkle no longer have to be ferried regularly to Britain in search of meaningful return.

"Prize money over jumps here has improved a lot, so there is not so much need to travel," Ted Walsh, the Irish commentator, said yesterday. "It used to be at Christmas that you had to go to the King George VI Chase at Kempton, but now we've got a £50,000 chase at Leopardstown (the Ericsson Chase) and other races worth tens of thousands. 20 years ago they were worth £1,000 a time."

"Okay, Cheltenham is still the big one, but there is no need any

more to go after all the prizes. Arkle had to do it in his heyday because the prize money over here was a pittance."

Ted Walsh is Ireland's one-man job centre. The former champion amateur rider is now a trainer, horse dealer, writer and broadcaster to name just a smattering of his postings. There can never be peaceful nights then for either the butcher, baker or candlestick maker near his Greenhills yard at Naas in Co Kildare, though there is one job out of Walsh's reach, that of his nation's outstanding trainer.

Whenever this honour comes along it seems to be bestowed on a chap by the name of O'Brien. On the Flat, in the old days, Vincent was nonpareil, now Aidan (no relation) is soaring higher than a swift.

O'Brien has a runner in both the Tripleprint Gold Cup and the Bula Hurdle at Prestbury Park this afternoon as he tries to improve on a mediocre ear-

ly record in Britain. "When Aidan goes over to England he's taking on decent horses in decent races, and it's not like over here where he has the bulk of the runners and he's winning a lot of little races as well," Walsh explained. "I've no doubt that, if he was based in England, he would take the place by storm."

"It's a bit like saying that Martin Pipe hasn't dominated racing in Ireland, even though he's done it at home. You don't have that many runners away from your own racing."

O'Brien's runner in the Tripleprint is Royal Mouthbrowne, who has enjoyed the sort of kind fortune this season for which his land is proverbially recognised. Merry Gale surrendered to him at Clonmel and Fairhouse, and Imperial Call, the Gold Cup winner, also threw himself to earth at the latter track with victory seemingly assured. Nevertheless, Royal Mouthbrowne (next best 240)

is an improving beast, and if his luck holds, he may repay the obvious favourite, Addington Boy, O'Brien's Theatreworld has no chance of beating Large Action in the Bula Hurdle on the evidence of their meeting in the Hutton's Grace Hurdle at Fairhouse earlier this month, but it may be another runner worth following here. Pridwell (145) runs well at Cheltenham (he was third in the Champion Hurdle last March) and as he will travel from Martin Pipe's yard his belly is unlikely to be scarring the floor on this seasonal debut. He is worth a chance, particularly as he won on his comeback in the Cotswolds last year.

At Haydock, there should be a stirring contest for the Tommy Whittle Chase when One Man takes on Quiball Crockett. The latter may just have to give second best in this conditions race, as in a handicap One Man would have to give him the best part of eight stone. For this

reason, Gordon Richards's grey is given marginal preference at a time of year, and around a course he enjoys. Even Imperial Call would struggle to match him in these circumstances.

Rough Quest, the Grand National winner, will be many people's idea as the one for the forecast, especially as Jenny Pittman's Nathaniel Lad will not be without his regular jockey, Warren Marston was injured in a schooling accident on the gallops yesterday and his seat on the Sun Alliance Chase winner is taken by Rodney Farrant.

Earlier there will be one of racing's more exhilarating sights as Clay County (1.15) blasts off in front and attempts to get home before the petrol runs out, while there are prospects, too, for a horse who runs his races the other way round. No animal has been able to resist the scintillating thrusts of TULLYHURRY TOFF (145) recently and he should now record his fifth consecutive victory.

Grace Hurdle over 2½ miles at Fairhouse earlier in the month, looks a class above today's rivals. Pridwell looks the chief threat.

240: ADDINGTON BOY, who ran a creditable race on his reappearance to about four lengths third to Pridwell in the Hutton's Grace Hurdle at Fairhouse, looks the chief threat.

345: KARSHI, 1½ lengths second to Pridwell in a 2m 3f handicap hurdle at Warwick, can go one better. Mandys Mantles looks the threat.

NEW COURSE: The progressive Bertones may be the danger.

3.15: GENERAL PONGO, who won a novices' handicap chase by 1½ lengths from Whirly at Bangor last time, is marginally preferred to Imperial Vintage, who is proven over these testing fences but came to grief on his latest venture.

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Richard Edmondson says the big race at Cheltenham can go to an Irish raider

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Richard Edmondson says the big race at Cheltenham can go to an Irish raider

is an improving beast, and if his luck holds, he may repay the obvious favourite, Addington Boy, O'Brien's Theatreworld has no chance of beating Large Action in the Bula Hurdle on the evidence of their meeting in the Hutton's Grace Hurdle at Fairhouse earlier this month, but it may be another runner worth following here. Pridwell (145) runs well at Cheltenham (he was third in the Champion Hurdle last March) and as he will travel from Martin Pipe's yard his belly is unlikely to be scarring the floor on this seasonal debut. He is worth a chance, particularly as he won on his comeback in the Cotswolds last year.

At Haydock, there should be a stirring contest for the Tommy Whittle Chase when One Man takes on Quiball Crockett. The latter may just have to give second best in this conditions race, as in a handicap One Man would have to give him the best part of eight stone. For this

reason, Gordon Richards's grey is given marginal preference at a time of year, and around a course he enjoys. Even Imperial Call would struggle to match him in these circumstances.

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## sport

Brighton are 11 points adrift at the bottom of the League, heavily in debt, soon to be homeless and facing a revolt from their own fans. Steve Gritt was offered the job of managing them this week. Glenn Moore asked him why he accepted

# The man with the hardest job in football

Sitting in Steve Gritt's office yesterday afternoon, you have to ask him, "Why?" The answer is brutally honest. "It's a job."

But it is not any old job. Managing Brighton and Hove Albion is widely regarded as the toughest job in football. Liz Costa, vice-chair of Brighton's Supporters' Club calls it the "hardest job any manager has ever taken".

She may be biased but she is not exaggerating. This morning Brighton are 11 points adrift at the foot of the Third Division. They have large debts, they lose their ground in May, and the support is alienated. There is not even the safety net of a rebuttal for the Conference champions. Brighton are more likely to be rejected by the Conference and sent straight down to the Dr Martens League - and probable closure.

So, 48 hours into the job, is the affable Gritt having second thoughts. "I'm finding it OK so far," he said brightly. "The players have responded very well. The first morning each of us were testing the water, sitting back and getting used to one another. This morning I've

**BOTTOM OF THIRD DIVISION**

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Exeter	22	7	5	10	21	28	26
Doncaster	22	7	3	12	24	33	24
Manfield	21	5	9	7	21	22	24
Leyton O	21	6	9	6	18	18	24
Havant	22	6	5	11	23	31	23
Darlington	22	6	4	12	30	39	22
Harrogate	21	6	4	11	23	28	22
Brighton	22	3	4	15	18	42	11

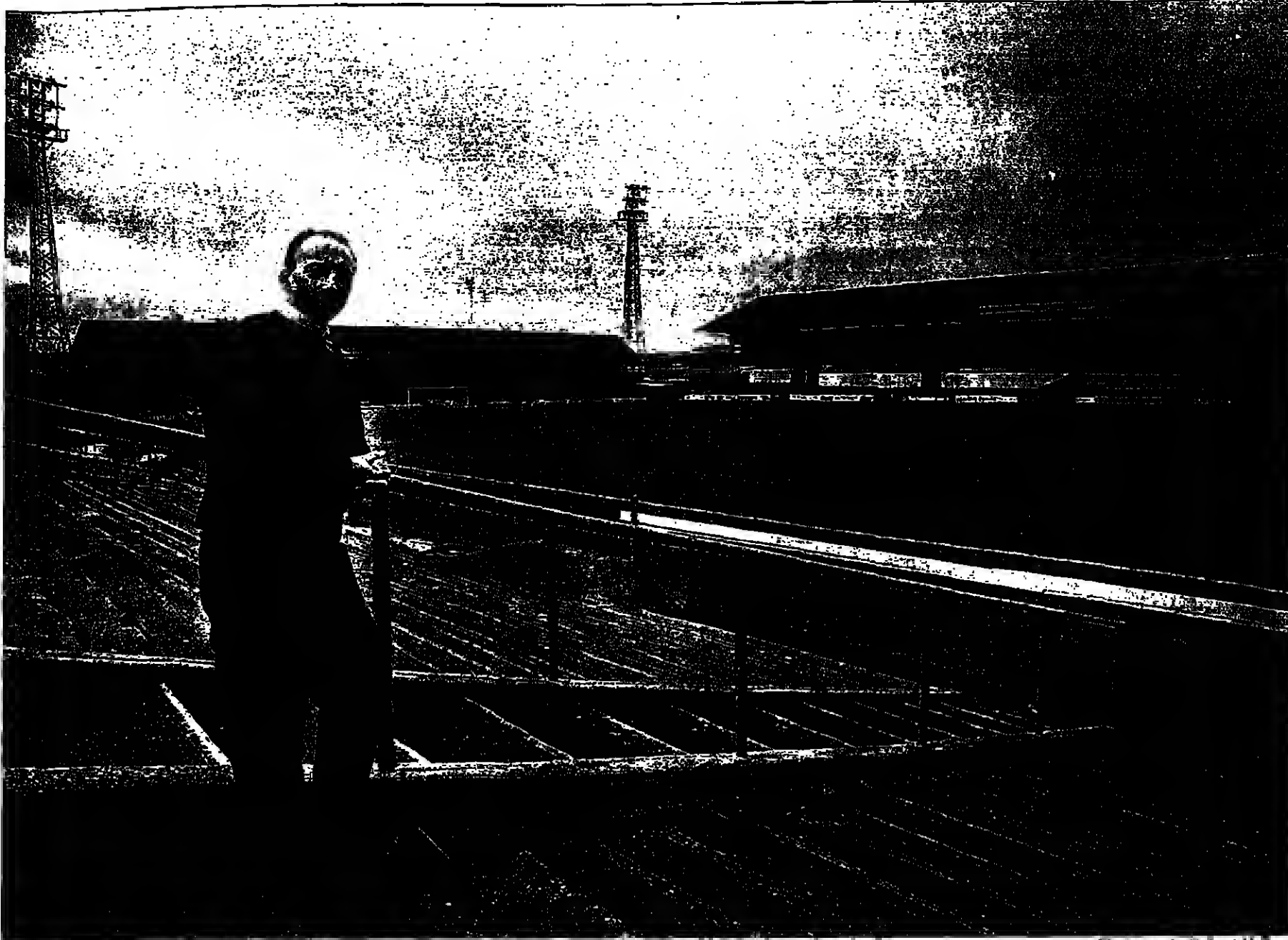
had to do a lot of work and they have responded."

"When I left Charlton [he was joint-manager with Alan Curbishley before being sacked 18 months ago] it was the first time I have been out of work and out of football. I have been very keen to get back. When the chance came up, even though it was here with all the problems, I felt it was a chance I could not turn down."

The "problems" ... a brief recap in case any of Michael Knight's alien friends have just returned from Mars. Thirteen years ago, as Gordon Smith so evocatively recalled in these pages a month ago, they were a short away from beating Manchester United in the FA Cup final. That came at the end of four seasons in the old First Division and engendered hope of a quick return.

Instead they slipped through the divisions and into the red, imperiled by bad performances on the pitch and at the bank. The historic but ageing ground - parts of it look more like the derelict West Pier than a football stadium - has been sold and the proceeds apparently squandered. Having bought the club for £56.25 the chairman, Bill Archer, spends his time in Lancashire and refuses to sell to a consortium backed by supporters. Hove Council and McAlpine.

The supporters have thus run a passionate, organised and popular



Ground control: Steve Gritt, the new Brighton manager, surveys his new domain at the Goldstone Ground yesterday

Photograph: Robert Hallam

campaign to oust Archer and his chief executive, Derek Bellotti. Before today's match with Hull - who have similar problems of their own - they will release 1,000 balloons in Hove Park before resuming their customary abuse of Bellotti at the match.

It is not the ideal environment to work in. Costa even greeted Gritt's appointment with the comment: "We didn't want anybody to take the job. We wanted people to say they can't work with the current board."

"It is not a question of working with the board," Gritt said. "Somebody had to come in and get hold of the team otherwise the whole thing will crumble."

"I'm sure a lot of supporters will say it is crumbling anyway but that doesn't interest me. I have come here

to concentrate solely on the football. I have not come to get wrapped up in all the politics, football is my business."

"People turn around and say, 'You must get involved, surely?' But I made it clear at the interview that I have not come here to be anybody's puppet. I have come here to work with the players on the training ground which is something I have missed more than anything."

"I hope the supporters will get behind the lads. If the players do what I hope they will do, what I am trying to get them to do, and they roll their sleeves up and match Hull for effort their ability will come through. If the fans see that they are having a go they will appreciate it."

"I understand what the fans are feeling. I can sympathise 100 per

cent. I've been there. I was at Charlton when we had to leave The Valley. They've been coming here for years. It's a tradition thing. Suddenly that's been taken away from them. But if they can get behind the team the players will appreciate it. I'll appreciate it."

The 39-year-old Gritt was aptly named. As a player he was a grafter rather than a stylist. He played 406 League games in a 16-year career, all but 26 of them with Charlton whom he represented in every position except goalkeeper. He was then co-manager for four years before being unexpectedly sacked after a change at boardroom level.

Given the resources Charlton were very successful under Gritt and Curbishley but recognition was slow. In his book *Left Foot Forward* Gary

Nelson recalls Graham Taylor, when at Wolves, introducing Curbishley to John de Wolf with the line, "I don't think you've met Steve Gritt."

The shared roles, and Gritt's one-club career, has made work hard to find. He even applied to be Charlton's youth team coach this summer. "I've kept myself busy going to games, that was a piece of advice I was given - 'be seen'. I also got my boots on again playing for Welling and Tooting and Mitcham but that got in the way of the scouting."

The scouting, and some youth coaching, was mainly for Gillingham though he recently watched Brighton for Torquay.

"They looked capable of scoring, but also of letting them in. I want them to play with discipline but freedom as well. If they can do that and

relax a bit I think they can get results. It takes time but I have not got that much time. It is not like coming in at the start of the season. Christmas is one of the busiest times to come in, it is games, games, games. It does not give much time to work with players because obviously they have to recuperate. It is a careful juggling act. I have piled a load of information into them this morning - only time will tell how much as gone in."

"I've got some money available. How much will depend on what I need. I may have to do some wheeling and dealing."

"The situation has not helped, nor has the fact that they have not won many games. It starts to grind you down. You think when is the next point coming? A lot of them will be

thinking when is the next bonus coming? They've got families and mortgages."

"But it is not just about money, it is about pride as well. One lad has already said to me when you are losing every week it is difficult to go home. It is like any job, if you feel you have done a good week's work, you have a weekend off and come in looking for another good week. Football's no different."

Again, Gritt's been there, when Charlton nearly went bust in 1984. "I remember sitting in the supporters' club. We were waiting with all our gear to go to Blackburn and the game got called off because they thought we were going out of business."

"You wonder, 'Will I get paid? I could be out of work tomorrow, if that happens who will want me?' It can affect you but the resilience the players showed - that was the season we got promoted."

"Look at what Charlton have achieved, even though they had the rigmarole of leaving The Valley, then going back to it. And what Gillingham have achieved - two years ago they were two weeks from

**'Somebody had to come in and get hold of the team otherwise the whole thing will crumble'**

going out of business. Maybe the supporters here can look at that and take some encouragement."

"Hopefully I can organise the team to start getting results which is what it is all about. I've got experienced players who I will be looking to to set an example and some good youngsters. I'm told the underlying crop are very good so, on the pitch, the future looks hopeful."

But which pitch? We now walk across the Goldstone for the photographs and Gritt recalls: "I've had some blinding games here. We played in front of 35,000 here once."

That is the potential, realising it is another matter. Just over two years ago interviewed the then-Brighton manager, Liam Brady, Brighton had nearly made the Second Division playoffs in May, attracting crowds of 15,000. Then they had beaten Premier League Leicester in both legs in the Coca-Cola Cup. The subsequent upbeat interview ran under the line "Happy days are returning to Brighton".

So, no rash predictions from me this time. Only that Gritt has his work cut out. When the photographer and I wished him luck as we parted we meant it. He will need every bit.

## No 196 Bristol football FAN'S EYE VIEW

by Mark Wenham

Down here in the West Country we may lack the cultural sophistication of the inhabitants of "The Emerald City" or "The Smoke" but we have them plenty, less when it comes to pithy nicknames for a hometown. "Bristol" - the Graveyard Of All Ambition - may not be the sort of slogan to launch a car-sucker campaign, but it's fair comment in a city where dynamism is spending less than three hours in a sunny beer garden. Mrs Emerson would like it here, especially when she realises how near we are to the golden sands of Weston-super-Mare.

The attractions of other activities has been the main reason our sports teams have underachieved to consistently over the last decade, more so than our two football clubs, City and Rovers. Their main contribution to the nation's favourite game has been to supply the Premier League with a stream of centre-halves guaranteed to make Shearer giggle in his sleep, Rennie, Dryden, Yates, Curle, Tanner, Peacock, Newman, Scoules.

Given the presence of both teams in the Second Division, with average crowds last season of 8,000 for City and 6,000 for Rovers, in a city with half a million potential matchgoers, you could be forgiven for thinking that there is no great residual need of affection for football in Bristol. In fact pubs are invariably packed for Premiership games and England internationals, and most long-term residents (i.e. people other than students) have an affinity in either City or Rovers that is heartfelt enough to have engendered a typically robust metropolitan rivalry. Supporters rib each other at the opposition's expense in the local pub, and occasionally try to set fire to each other's Ladams.

This antipathy is genuine

enough to ensure another sell-out crowd for tomorrow's derby at Ashton Gate.

Historically, allegiance to each team depended on which side of the River Avon you lived, but it has become increasingly clear to me that City and Rovers fans are completely different personality types.

City fans are basically delusional and share the happy conviction that good times are just around the corner. This delusion has its roots in a Sleeping Giant complex, which stems from having spent a short spell in the old First Division, possessing an excellent stadium, a manager who played in Serie A, and a chairman who played keyboards for the Pet Shop Boys. This feeling of superiority handily ignores the fact that for the last century there has rarely been more than one division between Bristol's two protagonists.

Rovers supporters, conversely, live according to the premise that if you expect nothing from life then you'll never be disappointed. This pessimism has been founded in recent years on a lack of money, and the lack of a decent ground, both conditions that seem set to last for the foreseeable future.

Time for a prediction on the big game. Joe Jordan has created a brand new City team through some astute signings, and has fashioned them into a creative attacking side that are top scorers in their division and good bets for promotion. Rovers are the usual mix of ex-moo-Leaguers, callow youths and pros on the downward slide. They play route one, are desperately low on confidence and rely on a sound defence to compensate for their lack of any proven goalscorer. The result, therefore, should be a formality. One-nil to the Rovers.

## MAJOR WEEKEND FOOTBALL FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

<b>TODAY</b> 5.11 unless stated	<b>World Cup Group Five</b> Cyprus v Bulgaria (22.0) (at Tallinn stadium, Estonia)	<b>Group Six</b> Spain v Yugoslavia (20.0) (at La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switz)	<b>Group Seven</b> Belgium v Netherlands (17.0) (at King Baudouin stadium, Brussels)	<b>Group Eight</b> Malta v Turkey (at Cardiff Arms Park)	<b>Group Nine</b> Macedonia v Romania (22.0) (at Gazi Stadium, Sofia)	<b>Group Ten</b> Northern Ireland v France (at Millfield Park, Belfast) Portugal v Germany (21.45) (at Stadion of Light, Lisbon)	<b>FA Cup First Round</b> 1- Luton v Tottenham 2- Luton v Tottenham 3- Luton v Tottenham 4- Luton v Tottenham 5- Luton v Tottenham 6- Luton v Tottenham 7- Luton v Tottenham 8- Luton v Tottenham 9- Luton v Tottenham 10- Luton v Tottenham 11- Luton v Tottenham 12- Luton v Tottenham 13- Luton v Tottenham 14- Luton v Tottenham 15- Luton v Tottenham 16- Luton v Tottenham 17- Luton v Tottenham 18- Luton v Tottenham 19- Luton v Tottenham 20- Luton v Tottenham 21- Luton v 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Norwich v Southampton 11- Reading v West Ham 12- Sheffield United v Stoke 13- Sunderland v Tottenham 14- Watford v Wolves 15- Wigan v Wimbledon 16- Wolves v Arsenal 17- York v Leeds	<b>Second Division</b> 1- Barnsley v Blackpool 2- Burnley v Bradford 3- Cardiff City v Gillingham 4- Gillingham v Derby 5- Hull City v Ipswich 6- Ipswich v Luton 7- Luton v Notts County 8- Notts County v Peterborough 9- Peterborough v Reading 10- Reading v Shrewsbury 11- Shrewsbury v Stockport 12- Stockport v Torquay 13- Torquay v Walsley 14- Walsley v Walsley 15- Walsley v Walsley 16- Walsley v Walsley 17- Walsley v Walsley 18- Walsley v Walsley 19- Walsley v Walsley 20- Walsley v Walsley 21- Walsley v Walsley 22- Walsley v Walsley 23- Walsley v Walsley 24- Walsley v Walsley 25- Walsley v Walsley 26- Walsley v Walsley 27- Walsley v Walsley 28- Walsley v Walsley 29- Walsley v Walsley 30- Walsley v Walsley 31- Walsley v Walsley 32- Walsley v Walsley 33- Walsley v Walsley 34- Walsley v Walsley 35- Walsley v 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# Little Miss Firecracker

John  
Walsh  
meets...  
Imelda  
Staunton



It's Broadway in the Depression. The streets are full of unemployed drifters and sad-eyed losers, hoping to strike it rich gambling on the gee-gees or the roll of dice. Thrills are hard to come by in this aleatoric wasteland, but one place you can guarantee them is the Hot Box nightclub. A white piano, a quintet of foxy babes in a bewildering variety of shapes who parade about in spangly tulle and acres of leg—and then, from behind the tacky red Hot Box curtains, there bursts an extraordinary sight: a miniature, 5ft Meissen shepherdess, but with added fishnet thighs and huge pumpkininny smile. She sings Frank Loesser's farmyard-love classic "A Bushel and a Peck" with a catch in her voice, a weird eldritch squeak, and she sways across the stage wielding her pastoral crook like a guitar or a scythe, so that the tall horse-limbed dancing girls have to duck out of its way. She is a tiny force of nature. She is irresistibly gorgeous. At the song's climax, with the Hot Box babes going chook-chook around the piano, the shepherdess throws handfuls of corn to the first few rows of the audience, who grab it ecstatically. Gentlemen in expensive suits try to establish eye contact with the singer who is so cheekily, so Diamond-Lil-ishly, making them eat out of her hand.

But this is not Broadway, nor the Depression, nor a nightclub, nor a porcelain figurine. This is the National Theatre's new production of *Guys and Dolls*, which Richard Eyre first staged in 1982, to the collective rapture of London theatregoers. In those days, Imelda Staunton played the smallest and dullest of the Hot Box girls, dancing behind John McKenzie, who sang Miss Adelaide, the shepherdess role. Two years later, McKenzie left and Staunton, with a certain apprehensiveness, took over. Now, 12 years later, she's back in the part. And watching *Guys and Dolls* again, one is amazed how much Staunton has not just made the part her own, eclipsing all memory of McKenzie's rather drooping and pathetic Adelaide, but how she has made it seem a far greater role. In La Staunton's hands, "the well-known fancée" becomes a complex figure—good-hearted but calculating, chronically disappointed but endlessly optimistic, dim but not glib, dying to marry her feckless boyfriend, Nathan Detroit, impresario of the permanently floating crap game, but longing to knock him into shape, shushily romantic but one of the girls, a wisecracker, a shrew, a sexpot... Why you'd think you were watching some bittersweet American version of *Everywoman* there on stage.

The key word is "bittersweet", of course. Imelda Staunton has been playing bittersweet for years, on stage, on television, in movies. Her presence in sitcoms like *Is It Legal?* or comedy dramas like *Up the Garden Path* or literary-canon movies like *Sense and Sensibility* or comedy-mysteries like Joan Smith's televised novels always complicate their texture because of the air of frustration, of unfulfilment or bravely-borne melancholy, that wafts around her like parma violets. Audiences seem to like the way her watermelon smile, her smart-cookie manner conceals a broken heart. It also means she can play anything, from Shakespeare to Chekhov to Sondheim to a telly sleuth, without undue strain.

But who is she really? Is her disposition sweet or bitter? The first shock, when you meet her, for lunch at the National's ritz Mezzanine restaurant, is how alarmingly Celtic she looks. Out of make-up, out of costume and character, she is a mass of red curls, angry blue eyes and rough windblown complexion. She resembles a Galway tinker, only without the shawl and the cardboard box. Her hard little eyes could be those of an IRA moll. And though you soon warm to her straight, confiding manner ("What exactly is *osso buco*? Is it? Yerrh?") one remains a little wary of her. Prolonged exposure to Mayo redheads would suggest that she could have a filthy temper. Does she? "No, I don't have a temper," she says pleasantly. "Although of course that's not healthy. I can't even say 'No, I'm not doing that...' without getting upset. I can't argue. I can be very clear about what I want, but I won't shout about it. I'm better at getting ahead of things. I'm not good at conflict, but I'm good at sensing it in the distance and defusing it."



'Chronically disappointed but endlessly optimistic': Imelda Staunton rehearsing the part she made her own, Adelaide, in 'Guys and Dolls'

Photo: John Haynes

I thought of Adelaide's on-off romance with Nathan, their screaming matches, their ill-matched temperaments, her determination, his constant retreat. Could she empathise? "I think Henry [Goodman, who plays Nathan] and I have a very good relationship. You feel he really loves her. He gets distracted a lot but, when he's with her, he really loves her. You feel it's not just a battle on her own, that I've really got to get this guy." Staunton habitually mixes up characters and actors like this, when talking about the part. It's as if her identification with Adelaide slides in and out of character all the time. So does her sense of Adelaide as a girlfriend, a singer, a fictional character and a good part to play. As we teased out the moral strands of the play, she said, "What I think is, the four main characters all grow up a bit in this story. Sarah [the Salvation Army virgin] who thinks, this is how my life is going to be, gets shown it can be other things as well. Adelaide decides she'll marry Nathan no matter what he is. Nathan gets a job on a news stand, Sky Masterson discovers it's all right to do something virtuous—they all make good journeys, and that's always interesting. And of course, if you get to sing in a nightclub at the same time, that's a nice perk costume-wise."

Staunton gives a tremendous on-stage impression of a Tin Pan Alley trouper. She practically bursts with emotion during "Adelaide's Lament", she hams up the Monroe-esque "Take Back Your Mink" with vigour, she rants like a tennant in "Sue Me", turning the last "When I think of the times..." into a single exasperated, wordless screech. It comes as a slight shock to discover that she doesn't actually care for the form at all.

"Audiences like *Guys and Dolls* because it's a very good play. The songs are good too, yeah, but you could perform it without the songs and still have a very good play. I just don't like a lot of musicals. I think a lot of them are crap. They're weak. Often you get a crap script and a couple of good songs, and you're supposed to think you've had a good night out. It's just not good enough." Gosh. Was there one she really really hated? "Oh, there was *Mack and Mabel*, which I did at Nottingham—great songs, terrible book. It's so frustrating. And I always want the songs to further the action. Not many of them do. The show stops, it's a song, the show starts again. It's so..." She speared a mouthful of monkfish, having turned down the Bayonne ham that was supposed to accompany it; she's a meat vegetarian, but not a fish vegetarian. "And when I was asked to do *Into the Woods*, they sent me a tape to listen to

and the music went [she adopts a prancing, children's-TV delivery] "Into the woods alone alone, into the woods..." and I just went [she mimes switching off a tape] "Off! I don't think so." But she was in *Into the Woods*... "Oh, Richard Jones persuaded me to do it and I enjoyed it very much. But I'm not a great fan of Sondheim, and he knows it and is very nice to me." You don't like his lyrics? "I just like a tune." The tuneful, musical-hating Staunton grew up in



north London. Both her parents were from the west of Ireland, her father a building contractor, her mother a hairdresser. "She was the fiery one, my father was the calm one. That's where it all [ie acting] comes from, the Celtic thing." The family (Imelda was an only child) lived over the shop. As a child, her taste in showbiz was for mid-century Americans. "I was a bit of a Frank Sinatra fan, people like him. When I was 11 or 12, I used to watch Dean Martin and Sinatra movies. I loved all that. I was a rather old-fashioned child. I liked Tony Curtis when I was 11. I always liked the Forties, at least the showbiz period. And I noticed how, when we got our costumes for *Guys and Dolls*, all the guys said, 'Why don't we dress like this anymore?'"

She went to a convent school, the La Sainte Union in Highgate, run by an order of French nuns, and has happy memories of the place—she's been back as a distinguished old girl, to talk to the Sixth Form. Part of the curriculum was a class in elocution, run by a Miss Stoker. She took a shine to the small but volcanic Imelda, encouraged her and steered her towards Rada. "I'm not sure what she saw in me. Maybe a future. But I was quite versa-

tile, and she used to get me to perform at drama festivals. I used to do funny pieces like "The Maid on the Phone". You remember *The Three Faces of Eve*, that Joanne Woodward movie? She re-cast it for me as a monologue. And then she started a drama class after school..."

The super-critical Miss Stoker got her protégée into Rada. She left at 20, in 1976, and her career took off. She joined the RSC and then in 1982,

**'Out of make-up, out of costume and character, she is a mass of red curls, angry blue eyes and rough windblown complexion'**

only six years after drama school, the National Theatre. She went through a dozen "small funny lady" parts (including *The Fair Maid of the West* for the RSC), before determinedly branching out into Chekhov and Dennis Potter; she was the deeply nasty Nurse White in *The Singing Detective*. Of the people she has dealt with, she comes over most luridly about David Iqbal, the Japanese American choreographer of *Guys and Dolls* ("He's an absolute genius. He makes dancers look like actors and actors look like dancers") and most defensive about Kenneth Branagh, who directed her in both *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Peter's Friends*. "I'm very protective about him because he's quite fantastic but the press don't seem to think so. Anyone who's ever worked for him knows his drive and energy and enthusiasm. You couldn't find a better producer, a better enabler than him." Was she in the Branagh *Hamlet*? "No. It's a bloody oversight..."

It reminded her of the Goldie Hawn line in *The First Wives Club*, about how the only roles currently available to women are the girlfriend, the District Attorney and *Driving Miss Daisy*. Staunton laughed,

having rarely been out of work for more than a fortnight. "That's an old one, the whinge about women in the theatre. I think playwrights are writing better and better parts for women. But you have got to keep taking parts as long as you can and not turning things down, because when you're 50 or 55, you'll start to run out."

Though she recently turned a mere 40, there is a distinct trace of incipient grande dame about Imelda. It's only noticeable when she's talking about her peer group of leading ladies, as if she has now joined their august company and it was time everyone knew about it. "There are lots of good parts around at the moment. Have you seen Janet McTeer in *A Doll's House*? The most breathtaking performance you'll ever see. If she doesn't get an Olivier award for that—if bloody Diana Rigg gets one [for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*] and Janet doesn't, I'm going to be most pissed off."

From her current perspective—happily married to the actor Jim Carter, with a baby daughter Bessy Beatrice, aged three—she considers the chronic yearning of the "character" actress, forever wondering where the next job is coming from. "I suppose I did spend a lot of time thinking, 'I wish I was playing that' or 'Why can't I be in that?', and I'm so glad to have stopped all that. I've lost that pathetic need. It's not that I don't care any more. But if I didn't work for the next year or so, it'd be fine, as long as we could pay the mortgage."

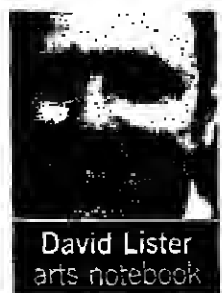
But what would she do if she didn't act? "I could get a job in a drama school." She means it. Imelda Staunton is giving up singing Adelaide at the end of the present NT run in March, and not coming back for the big, all-thro-the-summer run. But since she's turned the part into the biggest prima donna role on the London stage, was there anything more important?

"My life?" she says with an interrogative lift. "I just want to be at home with the baby. We may do another series of the sitcom [*Is It Legal?*] in August and I can't think of anything nicer than to have April, May and June at home. I have my cake and I want to eat it all. I want to play this part and I want to go home." And with that, the equilibrium and straightforward actress who currently inhabits the soul of ditty *Everywoman* with such passionate conviction on the Olivier stage, took herself off to be photographed, practising her Baader-Meinhof scowl for the camera. *'Guys and Dolls'*, Olivier, RNT, London, SE1 (0171-928 2252) now previewing

## Andrew and the Amazing Technicolor lawsuit

Those whose cultural reading may not extend to the court cases on the foreign pages of *The Stage* have missed a little treasure. A judge in New York has dismissed a claim for \$78.09 by a certain Andrew Lloyd Webber. As this sum would barely buy Sir Andrew branch in New York and the case was considered serious enough for a four-day non-jury trial, this was all rather puzzling. Reading on, it becomes more so.

Sir Andrew's claim was in fact a counter-claim against composer Ray Repp for allegedly stealing a song from his musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. The \$78.09 was



David Lister  
arts notebook

the sum that Repp's song "Till You" had generated over the years—a heartless statistic to have read out in open court, but counter-claiming composers will stop at nothing when their honour is questioned.

Repp had actually sued Lloyd Webber first in 1990 claiming he had taken "Till

You" and turned it into the theme song from *Phantom of the Opera*. Lloyd Webber agreed to "borrowing" the song, but not from Repp. He claimed it was taken from his own song "Close Every Door", which was indeed in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and therefore if any illegal borrowing had been done it was by Repp. Anyway, Repp's suit was thrown out in 1994. Repp appealed and Lloyd Webber filed his counter-claim.

At this point, one stops to marvel at the musical literacy of American judges. Dismissing the Lloyd Webber counter-claim, Judge Shirley Wohl Kram stated: "Although the songs

share some musical devices, such as rising arpeggios and descending tetrachords, such tools are among the most common devices used in music." Just the sort of throwaway lines they come out with at Lincoln's Inn. Happily both Repp and Sir Andrew have said they will appeal in their respective suits, so we can look forward to another memorable brush off for someone from Judge Shirley Wohl Kram.

It's also noteworthy that while Sir Andrew denied plagiarising any of Repp's material, he did admit to using works of Bach, Grieg and Holst for "Close Every Door". All happily out of copyright, but Repp managed to trump that. "Till

You" has lyrics taken from the book of *Luke*.

It was a surprise to hear Sir Peter Hall say that he will be directing his first *King Lear* next year when he opens his new company at the Old Vic. To run the RSC and National Theatre for a quarter of a century and miss out on *Lear* is close to carelessness. It was also a surprise as when Sir Peter returned to Stratford upon Avon to direct *All's Well That Ends Well* a few summers ago, the RSC publicity material claimed this was the one Shakespeare Sir Peter had never directed. Actually there are a few still to do including *Much Ado About Nothing* and *King John* as well as *Lear*, he told me. But

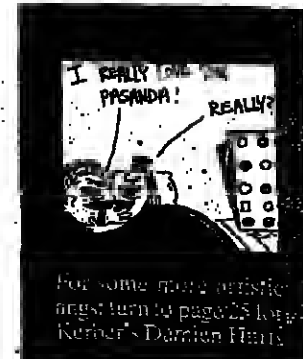
why let the facts get in the way of a good press release?

Life is unpredictable for Lyan Redgrave at the moment. *This Is Your Life* surprised her after her one-woman show at the Haymarket Theatre, with sister Vanessa rushing over from John Gabriel Barkman at the National complete with stage snow in her hair. And last weekend Lynn flew to Washington to attend the Kennedy Arts Awards at the White House. Meeting President Clinton, she was ready with "you don't know me but" when he said: "Hey, I've just seen your new film, *Shine*. I had a home screening." So the President of the United States has private screenings of low

budget Australian-made movies. Is he a secret arts junkie? Or does he just have time on his hands?

A Christmas lesson from the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Not just a lesson in good housekeeping, though unlike any other major British orchestra, it receives no government subsidy and remains the most recorded chamber orchestra in the world. Its real lesson is in how to combine a concert with the season of goodwill. Next Tuesday at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the concert culminating in Beethoven's First Symphony will involve audience and performers bringing a shoebox or other suitable container full of

practical items such as socks, shoes, blankets and food, which will be distributed among the homeless. The Shoebox Concert (box-office number 0171-960 4242) could set a seasonal lead and not just for orchestras. Roll on the shoebox pantomimes.





# arts & books

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## Put away childish things

Paul Taylor reviews  
alternative theatrical  
fare for younger people

**A**t this time of year, children find themselves squeezed – figuratively speaking – at both ends. Instead of acting in shows developed from improvisation and real pupil input, all too many glazed, over-rehearsed, middle-class schoolkids will have had to take part in Christmas “entertainments” penned by adults. And what’s worse, just the kind of adults who think it’s huge fun if children are given, on occasion, archly “grown-up” lines to say – thus essentially leaving them out of the joke and feeling unsure about what exactly the audience is laughing at.

Required to impersonate spurious sophistication as performers, children are conversely expected, as consumers, to chaperone their parents to shows that gratify an adult’s distorted nostalgia for lost innocence. As is the case every year, the country is awash with stagings of *Peter Pan* – from the thrillingly large scale, such as Matthew Warchus’s spectacular, airborne and emotionally painful rendering at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, to the charmingly intimate – like the version directed by Dylis Hamlett at the Watermill, Newbury, which finds cheeky ways of getting round the problem that, in this confined but beautiful space, flying is out.

JM Barry, who had sad biographical reasons for wanting to put perpetual prepubescence on a plinth, can be credited with creating the most supremely blackmailing moment in world drama. Poor Tinkerbell, having turned up trumps and drunk the poison to protect Peter, is about to twinkle her last twinkle. But then “She says – she says she thinks she could get well again if children believed in fairies! Say quick that you can believe! If you believe, clap your hands!” As a child, I used to wonder how you were supposed to clap your hands when both your arms were being twisted behind your back.

Not that I’m against this moment. Yesterday, reviewing Jonathan Miller’s joylessly rationalist *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, I argued that it came across as the work of someone who, when he was a child watching *Peter Pan*, would have allowed Tinkerbell to die, rather than clap his hands. This was intended as an insult. You wouldn’t want your child to not clap, or never to have believed in fairies: on the other hand, wouldn’t it be fairer to them, after a certain age, to come clean and make a joke of the comical, sad fact that it’s also to hush adult illusions that they are being asked to applaud? This would constitute as bracing an introduction as any to the huzzarries of the grown-up world and its peculiar demands on children.

That moment in *Peter Pan* has been given shrewd creative twists by other writers. Towards the end of Beryl Bainbridge’s fine novel, *An Awfully Big Adventure*, the heroine, a young member of a professional rep company putting on *Peter Pan*, hears that the seasoned old pro playing Captain Hook, with whom she has been having underage sex, has apparently committed suicide. It’s her job to flash the torch on the mirror that creates the illusion of Tinkerbell. That night, though, “Stella dropped the torch and let it roll into the wings as the children brought their palms together to save Tinkerbell. The light swished from the back-cloth. For a moment, the clapping continued, rose in volume, then died raggedly away, replaced by a tumult of weeping...” A wonderful objective correlative for the death of the remnants of this girl’s innocence.

In Steven Spielberg’s movie, *Hook*, the Tinkerbell scene, played by lisping American schoolchildren, is interrupted by the sound of a mobile phone. This belongs to Robin Williams’s Peter, a repressed lawyer who takes his work everywhere and is almost



Beauty and the Beast? Liz May Price and Simon Gregor at the Young Vic

PHOTO: PAU ROS

frightened of spending time with his kids. Why? Because he’s “in denial” that he was once Peter Pan and lived in Neverland. This fascinating mess of a movie should be compulsory additional viewing for all children who go to the stage show because it’s an invaluable insight into the way adults often don’t even know the right questions, let alone the correct answers.

*Hook* is full of signs that Spielberg is aware that our conception of childhood innocence has changed radically since Barry’s day. “What is this – *Lord of the Flies* pre-school?” mutters an anxious Williams on rejoining the Lost Boys, who here are a jungle-dwelling, racially mixed gang of potential juvenile crime statistics. On the other hand, the movie buys into all that psychobabble about bonding with your inner child, and with Williams, as with most people who go on in this way, you hope that when they find their inner child, it turns out to be the school bully.

There are two very interesting alternatives to *Peter Pan*’s view of innocence now on in London. Adolescents would get something out of Strindberg’s peculiar fairytale-like *Swan White*, directed now by Timothy Walker at the Gate. People familiar with this dramatist’s *Easter*, with its useful heroine who can feel the pains of flowers and overworked telegraph wires, will appreciate that, rather as sentimentality is the opposite side of the coin to cynicism, a certain wetness with regard to innocence is

the corollary of Strindberg’s keen knowledge of the heart’s darkness. But this story of a young girl who, left to the mercies of her wicked stepmother, once the less eventually works her way up to a selfless love that can raise the dead and offer forgiveness, is a weird and refreshing change from panto.

Proving once again, though, that the Young Vic consistently produces the best young people’s Christmas shows, Laurence Boswell’s theatrically thrilling version of *Beauty and the Beast* is performed in an involving, presentational style. Not sitting on the knock-about comedy and properly scary with its spooky tall doors in the aisles, behind which all manner of fearful things may lurk, Boswell’s version is also an imaginatively haunting meditation on the idea (as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* puts it) that “Love looks out with the eyes, but with the mind”. The show is salutary for two other reasons. The Prince turns out to be quickly attractive rather than your standard dolt. And when *Beauty*’s prevarications kill the Beast, instead of finding her inner child, *Beauty* here finds her inner grown-up.

*Peter Pan*: West Yorkshire Playhouse (0113-244 2111); Watermill, Newbury (01635 46044); *Swan White*: The Gate, London W11 (0171-229 5387); *Beauty and the Beast*: Young Vic, London SE1 (0171-928 6363)

## We two kingth

Cross-dressing, green fish and camcorders. Louise Levene on the delights of the nativity play

**T**he cast list for the playgroup nativity went up. Alexander would play the Gold King, Jack would play the Myrrh King. There was a blank space in between.

“Who’s bringing the Frankincense?”

“Ah. Slight problem. Jonathan wants to be a Queen.”

The three-year-old’s harmless flirtation with cross-dressing didn’t seem too troublesome at first. Nobody was fool enough to ponder the implications for his sexuality at this early stage, and his mother wasn’t weeping for her unborn grandchildren. Besides, if he thought of himself as a Queen, no one need ever know: the robes (two metres of acetate lining and a bit of tinsel) are entirely unisex. “OK, Jonathan, you can be a Queen.”

Rehearsals begin.

“We three Kingth of Orwient are.”

“Ahem.”

“Yes, Jonathan?”

“I’m a QUEEN!” affirms Jonathan, stamping his little Start-rites.

“Yes, I know, we agreed. You’re a Queen.”

“So it should be ‘We two Kingth AND A QUEEN’.”

Mayhem at the manger is part of the charm of the school nativity play. Indeed for many, weary of the nauseating sight of small, reluctant and totally inept performers shuffling through the old “Have you room at the inn? / Have you booked?” routine, it is the sole reason for attending. For every fond parent on their knees in the front row with a camcorder, there is a sour and jaded granny longing for her hrood to outgrow the whole sorry spectacle. The only fun she gets is when the shepherds, armed with authentic crooks by an inexperienced play leader, begin a full-scale fight in the stable straw.

Of course, this is a piece of cake compared with many of the problems that can arise when staging what was once a straightforward Christian pageant. The Pre-School Learning Alliance, anxious to reflect Britain’s religious and ethnic diversity, taken the view that Christmas shouldn’t get all the attention. In order to downplay the Christian element of the performance, nativity plays have come slightly adrift from the New Testament. Once upon a time the RE teacher would have locked young Jonathan in the stationery cupboard to learn Matthew 2, 1-12. Today playgroups are wary of antagonising other religions, and reluctant to force-feed the children of lapsed Anglicans with too much in the way of Christian doctrine. Very often the ritual aloof is left, isolated from the texts that gave birth to it.

As a result, your average toddler tends to regard the holy family pageant as a fancy dress free-for-all. Mary, Joseph, Kings and the all-important “Baby Cheeses” are supplemented by soldiers, flower fairies, Ninja Power Rangers and anything else the dressing-up cupboard affords. No wonder the three-year-olds get confused. My local playgroup had a problem last year when explaining how Jesus’s birth is traditionally attested by a handful of animals. The Chosen Sheep, decidedly underwhelmed by the prospect of attending the nativity to a fluffy off-white trouser suit, had a much better idea: having grasped the conceit that the Holy Birth was once season for animal costumes, he dug out an iridescent green outhmer and went as a fish.

## And not an Aladdin among them...

Feeling pantophobic? From *The Witches* to *Frankenstein*, we review the best alternative Christmas shows in London

### Dick Daredevil

Not content with producing a Christmas show that’s for the family, the Steam Industry have come up with a musical comedy that’s about the family, in particular about the role of fathers and the needs of sons. Set in London during the Blitz, Dick Daredevil tells the story of Billy Spratt and his mother, Rose. Billy’s father has been killed during the war, but numerous surrogates abound. There’s Edmund, the feckless gay young man, who lives in Rose’s guesthouse, and shares in Billy’s innocent fantasies about the radio superhero Dick Daredevil. There’s Charles, the suave American officer, who Rose considers marrying to give Billy a man around the house. And above all, there’s Daredevil himself, a red-blooded (and red-tinted) superhero, whose intergalactic exploits Billy avidly follows on his mother’s art deco radiogram.

When Edmund invents a machine that can travel to and from Dick’s world, Billy gets a chance to show his mettle against the evil space emperor Von Rippenclaw – and to see how Daredevil copes with wartime England. To Phil Willmott’s credit he manages to weave the subtext subtly into the action, rather than running it down the audience’s throat. Too subtly, perhaps. What should be the highlight of the piece, Billy’s encounter with Daredevil in London, is passed over with reckless haste. All too brief, the best scene – a bittersweet sequence in which Daredevil sets out with Billy to foil a Nazi plot against Churchill but ends up getting drunk in the pub – hints at what might have been.

All is not lost, though. Steven Markwick’s score doesn’t exactly send you out into Fitzrovia foot-tapping, but it runs the gamut from pastiche Cole Porter to pastiche Kurt Weill well enough. Sarah Payne puts in a fine singing performance as Billy’s plucky mum, and Von Rippenclaw (Howard Samuels) makes a first-class villain, waxing lyrical about the “patter of little jackboots”. If the twin morals – anyone can be a hero, and families don’t have to have fathers – ultimately seem a little put, well, maybe it would help to be closer to Billy’s age than Dick’s.

Adrian Turpin  
*The Drill Hall, 16 Chertsey Street, WC1 (0171-637 8270). To 18 Jan*

### Frankenstein: The Panto

Not Mary Shelley’s monster-maker but Frankie N Stein, porter at Herr Pumpenmickle’s Bavarian hotel and brother of the culturally challenged Phyllis. Writer David Swan has co-opted Dracula and Dracula’s grandmother, Granula, into this low-budget hijinks, as well as a party of over-sexed schoolgirls and their only slightly less libidinous school mistress, Miss Nellie. As the self-regarding St Trinianette Bridget Blagg fights the chambermaid Heidi for the attention of Prince Ludwig, the dark count attempts to quench his thirst for virgin blood. Only a mad scientist with a penchant for peppermint saves the day.

Gillian King’s snappy little production shares features with the big-name, big-money pantomimes: shaving-foam pies, TV-inspired jokes (both television and transvestite) and a fondness for the words “bottom” and “knickers”. But the Tabard Theatre’s small space, as well as a young cast devoid of boxers and soap stars, make this a far more intimate affair, while John Asquith’s commanding Nellie (always on the right side of innocence, even when performing a striptease) gives new life to the cliché “There is nothing like a dame”.

AT  
*Tabard Theatre, Chiswick W4 (0181-995 6035). To 21 Dec*

### The Witches

It’s a brave theatre that sells wands that light up in the dark before its Christmas production. So it’s a mark of David Wood’s adaptation of Roald Dahl’s novel, that *The Witches* isn’t lost behind a tinselly sea of swizzle sticks, borne aloft like cigarette-lighters at a Barry Manilow concert. You can put a lot of this down to Dahl’s compellingly idiosyncratic vision of what a witch is like: toeless, bald as a coot, possessed of blue spit and able to sniff out a child at 40 paces (apparently they smell of dog-droppings). No surprise that the biggest laughs go to a joke about “DIY gravy” (guess) and a rodent trapped down a waiter’s pants.

But Wood, who also directs, never lets the snot-laden gags, or even the irritatingly cutesy puppet mice, distract from the plot. Nor is he afraid of silliness or to leave the stage almost bare when it suits his purpose. Dahl’s strange coming-of-age fable about the orphaned boy (a saccharin-free but winsome Karen Brif-

fett) who is transformed into a mouse comes through loud and clear, and is spared the happy-ever-after ending grafted on to last year’s Disney version. “How long does a mouse live?” asks the child condemned to spend the rest of his life avoiding cats and eating cheese. “Not very long, I’m afraid,” replies his grandmother. Moving, challenging and funny, *The Witches* is surprisingly intelligent fare for a West End children’s show. AT  
*Vaudeville, The Strand, London WC2 (0171-836 9987). To 18 Jan*

### Oedipus: The Pantomime

The show that’s not afraid to wear its eyes on its sleeve. Or so says the chorus. In fact, it’s more a case of the blind leading the blind. The plot doesn’t deviate that much from Sophocles’ original (though the old man may be looking down from Olympus scratching his head at a couple of deities called Terry and Juno). Unfortunately, it’s also not that much funnier. At the risk of sounding sick, the problem is that David Mitchell and Robert Webb’s script is curiously tame. It flirts with bad taste, but never quite goes all the way. And, let’s face it, what other reason can there be for doing *Oedipus* as a comedy than to plumb the depths? Still, if you’re so over-educated that the exchange “How are the Bacchi today?” “Oh, ecstatic as usual” makes you spit your sides, you may get some pleasure of it. Otherwise, go and buy Tom Lehrer’s song tribute to the king of Thebes, which does much the same job but in a 50th of the time. AT  
*Pleasance, London N7 (0171-609 1800). To 12 Jan*

### Listen to the Wind

Before his death earlier this year, Vivian Ellis penned three new songs for *Listen to the Wind*, a jolly slice of Victoriana, already jam-packed with arch little tunes about wicked pirates, sea witches and dopey talking birds. The story follows three children abducted from their home on Christmas Eve and spirited away to the Palace of Winds, where they defeat the evil forces of Black Thunder Cloud, a baddie with a “stormy” personality.

After a sticky beginning, where the poor little rich girl becomes friends with her ruffian cousins, and the company sing an interminable pastiche parlour song called “Timothy’s Under the Table”,

the play takes off, bouncing airily through its fey fantasy, and scattering delicious lyrics along the way. Miranda, the raddled mermaid, delivers a pleasingly world-weary number about her transition from fishy *femme fatale* to “old sea cow” (“I used to be an actress at the Moules Maminieres, the only thing I wore was seaweed in my hair”) and the cast perform with gusto, but this 1954 musical certainly shows its age.


After two hours of drawing-room whimsy, you begin to feel as though someone has been force-feeding you glacé cherries. For little children, the adventure and magical set design should keep them rapt, but while grown-ups may relish Ellis’s precious punning about Miranda’s “larks” with “sharks”, you can’t help wonder what anyone between the ages of seven and constant will make of it all. If they’re not sniggering over the old, I suspect they may find it all a bit rich. Lise Spencer  
*King’s Head, Upper St. London N1 (0171-226 1916). To 19 Jan*

### The Servant of Two Masters

I still haven’t quite got over a distrust of Carlo Goldoni since going to see *Courtesan*, the National Theatre’s bum-numbingly leaden medley of the Italian’s work, in the 1980s. Ted Craig’s *Servant of Two Masters* is something else, whizzy as the top of a cappuccino (indeed, its chessboard and primary colours design is reminiscent of that masterpiece of aeriation, *Juan Judge’s RSC Comedy of Errors*). It’s also about as outquishing as cappuccino, but who’s to begrudge a little well-whisked froth at Christmas?

The story is a kind of 18th-century cross between *Up Pompeii* and *Carry On Eating*, its hero the servant Buffalino, who runs himself off his feet trying to serve two masters at once. It’s full of clattering plates, slaps to the head, fast-swimming doors and a trifle the size of St Peter’s dome in Rome. There’s food in the audience, too, where tables have been set aside for patrons to eat and drink. If Miltos Yerolemou sometimes trips a little too hard to be liked as the eponymous manservant, there’s ample consolation in some finely drawn supporting performances, not least Richard Kane’s Venetian merchant as Jewish East End businessman, Pantalone. An enjoyable evening.

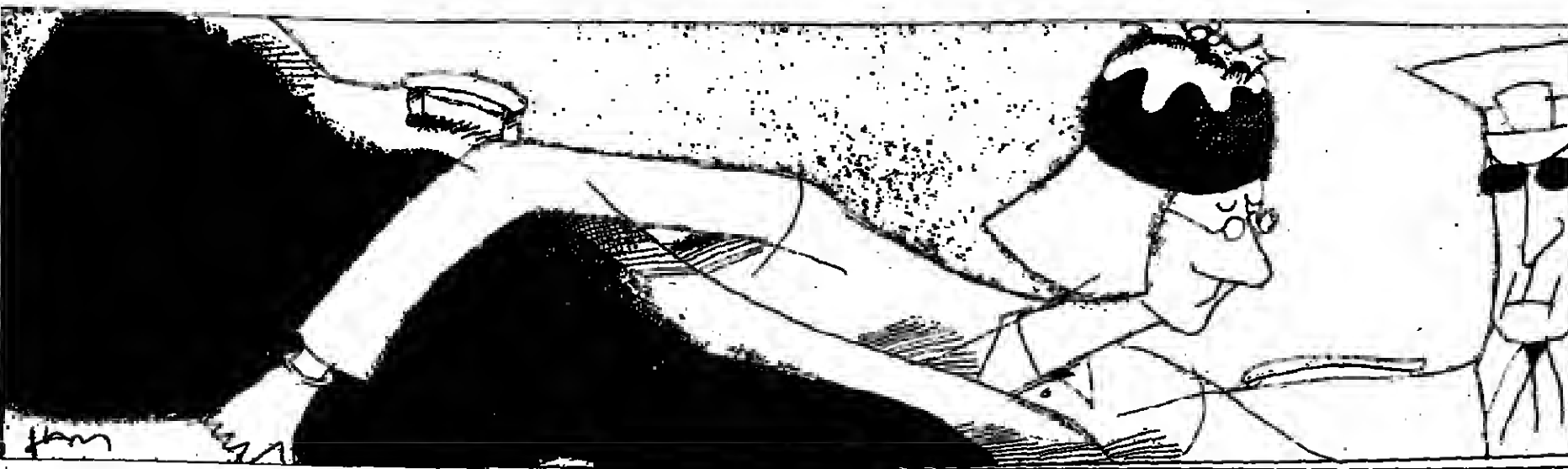
Warehouse Theatre, Croydon (0181-680 4060). To 26 Jan



“a romantic delirium for troubled times”  
KARL MILLER, *Observer*

**le Carré**





## The Suet crisis averted

You'd think that making your debut in Vienna's Musikverein might inspire a few nerves. But sheer terror? Ian Pillow recounts a wicked tale of breaking the British beef ban to save a few pence at Christmas

As the plane flies out of the low clouds on its descent to the airport, I see out of the window the city of Vienna spread below me. We, the members of the Bournemouth Symphony, are on our way to perform in the hallowed hall of the world-famous Musikverein (home to the mighty Vienna Philharmonic) and my first sight of the city sends waves of apprehension shivering through my body. Beads of sweat break forth on my brow.

One would expect the odd tingle of anticipation or even a small flutter to flap lazily inside the ample stomach of an old dog scarred by many years of hattle; but full-scale terror?

The reason is not so much the thought of performing to ears accustomed to hearing the world's finest orchestra, or facing the wrath of the world's most discerning critics. The truth is, I have become party to a daring international smuggling operation.

For on my person is concealed nothing less than my sister's Christmas pudding, destined for the larder of my niece in Frankfurt, where we are playing in a few days' time. (No, not to her larder. In the Jahnhunderthalle.)

When I had airily agreed to save my sister the postage stamps, I had not realised the full implications of my actions.

The alarm bells started ringing in the band room a few weeks ago when my colleagues were relating the tale of a violinist who had wanted to save money by packing a week's supply of Pot Noodles on a trip to Finland, only to be thwarted by a rule forbidding the import of reconstituted meat.

And therein lies the problem. I feel sure that the pudding will have been made of beef suet, and as Germany and British beef are not exactly best buddies at the moment, it would almost certainly be a no-no. Getting

caught with it would be worth at least two years in Spandau.

Just think of the headlines if the story broke. "Orchestra's performance contaminated by BSE-carrying viola player." What's more, I have learnt that if the orchestra is delayed while the pudding is sent off for analysis, making us late for the concert, we would incur a fine of £2,000. I feel the weight of the orchestra's success or failure on my shoulders. The pudding might, of course, be made from vegetarian suet, but being an ancient Pillow recipe, and looking at surviving ancient Pillows, that seems unlikely.

I therefore had an awkward decision to make. I could have put the pudding in a suitcase, which might have been less likely to be searched. But as our ancient BAC 111 plane (chartered from Airfix Airways) allowed such a ludicrously low weight limit, there would only have been enough weight left for a cuff-link.

So hand luggage it had to be. The do foil wrapped round the pudding has already set the metal detectors ringing at Bournemouth airport. Having to declare the pudding and watch it sail imperiously along the conveyor belt in front of the whole orchestra was a demoralising experience.

Somehow the phrase "It's only a Christmas pudding" - uttered in one's own language, at one's home town airport - doesn't exactly sound John Le Carré, but here in a strange land and with only "ein Kaffee bitte" to get me out of trouble, this moment of reckoning is awe-inspiringly terrifying.

I did have the idea of sneaking the pudding out of the hold-all by the carousel where the luggage is first spewed out, and surreptitiously popping it into my suitcase the moment the case appeared; but there isn't room for it. Alternatively I could plonk the pudding on to the

carousel, rush to the other end and pick it off right under the nose of the customs official, exclaiming loudly, "Aha! Here is my sister's 100 per cent vegetarian Christmas pudding, which is going to the poor people of Vienna," but my German phrasebook doesn't quite run to that. Nor, fortunately, does "Seize that man: he has a suet pudding" occur in too many of the phrasebooks belonging to those colleagues who have threatened to blow the lid off the whole scam with that one devastating sentence.

"Don't worry. Just walk normally," says one of my more sympathetic companions.

I have never "walked normally" to order in my life before. I suddenly can't remember how to do it. Put one foot in front of the other and transfer the weight from the back of the foot to the front of the foot and lift the back of the foot and carry it to the front. The dummy run (walk?) is not a success, particularly as, in order to appear nonchalant, my gaze is thrust 90 degrees upwards while I try to whistle "The Blue Danube". A less than wise choice - the sixth note onwards is way out of range. (You try it.) The total effect is odd - a curious lurch like a slow-motion ice-skating kangaroo emitting occasional high-pitched squeaks at the ceiling.

Eventually a semi-satisfactory choreography is achieved as I limp through the "Nothing to Declare" channel like a paraplegic crab - head bowed away from the customs official to my right, and the hold-all hard against the left leg and the chloa basin with its reinforced concrete concrete contents painfully bombarding my left knee. I have changed my repertoire to "The Radelet's March".

The play works like a charm. I am through. After the pressures of international crime, playing in the concert is so easy-peasy that I can

only assume the standing ovation and shouts of "Bravo!" are in recognition of my fearless heroism against officialdom. A veritable Robin Hood among viola players.

I can now sit back and enjoy the rest of the trip.

There are a few dress problems in Frankfurt. I am playing the concert in soaking wet clothes, having completely forgotten about the law of displacement ("When a large body is immersed in a small bath...") and allowed a tidal wave of soapy water to overflow the bathroom floor upon which my concert dress lay waiting.

One of the coach drivers has off-loaded a case containing an oboist's concert clothes at the hotel instead of at the hall where they are needed. Our tour guide has taken a taxi back from the hall to the hotel, picked up the case, taxied back and left the case in the taxi. The taxi has now returned to the hotel and deposited the case with the porter, who has gone and put a violinist's case on to a coach belonging to another orchestra that is now heading for the other end of the country.

This spanking new hotel boasts the latest hi-tech security system. You wave a plastic card hopefully in mid-air in the lift, whereupon you zoom up to the floor on which your room is located. Should you be invited on to another floor to inspect a friend's tea-making facilities, you have to go all the way down to reception and face an embarrassing interrogation.

"Warum geht Sie zu fünfte Etage?"

"Ich möchte das Hanky Panky."

In the Bierkeller after the concert, we sit around discussing the shortcomings of the hanky-panky-proof hotel. "Someone with a criminal mind could crack the system."

All eyes turn on me.

Ian Pillow is a viola player with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

## Twin peaks

CLASSICAL MUSIC  
Katia and Marielle Labèque  
Barbican Centre, London

Katia is the shorter sister, who frizzes her hair and has a wicked twinkle in her eye. Marielle looks like a Renaissance Madonna and acts like the elder. (There are two years between them, though I can never remember which way.) On Thursday night, Katia almost had to push Marielle into a second encore, a sort of fantasy on *The Entertainer*, by which time she was in party mood, all flailing arms and naughtily pointed fingers, which made the audience laugh. She might have been co-termining the boys in *Deszy Rides Again*. Perhaps Marielle sent her to bed without supper afterwards.

Of course, it's all an act. Two pianos are a rich, extravagant medium, with the potential for dramatic sparring, and the Labèques make the most of it. But they do really play together, as only dedicated duos can, and, despite Katia's antics, they don't overload the decibels. Which would have been so easy in the chaste classical language of Mozart's *Sonata in F* for two players at oboe piano, and his better-known *Sonata in D* for two pianos. Here, a little bit of contrast between them wasn't unwelcome, for Katia is the more brittle, percussive player, while Marielle sinks deeper into the keys and sustains a more resonant legato. The

sound reflected their different personalities.

It's odd that the original repertoire isn't larger, though writing for two pianos is a lot of work and there aren't so many good duos to reward the effort. But there are some sensational arrangements of orchestral music. Hearing Ravel's transcription of the *fiu*, two of Debussy's *Nocturnes*, "Nuages" and "Fêtes", was almost more thrilling than hearing the original, because of the added frisson of discovering how the unlikely could be managed. The Labèques played both with a wonderful ear for Debussy's colours and textures, and judged *Lumpi* perfectly. Their fingerwork and ensemble were immaculate. A pity we didn't get the last Nocturne, "Sérénade", then Katia could have added the vocals.

Ravel's own *Rapsodie Espagnole* followed, as sultry and evocative as it was disciplined by understatement. It's such fastidious music, it hardly invites exaggeration. So the girls earned the right to go a bit flash, and launched into Michel Camilo's *Jazz on Fire*, one of their irresistible crossover numbers. Katia spinning a thin little teardrop of a melody to begin, then both erupting in a tumultuous Latin tumble.

Adrian Jack



Labèque sisters: Immaculate fingerwork and ensemble

	THE EXHIBITION	THE PLAY	THE FILM	THE PERFORMANCE
	Howard Hodgkin	A Midsummer Night's Dream	101 Dalmatians	Domingo sings Wagner
overview	Hodgkin's lush, seemingly abstract paintings are actually intensely coloured evocations of people and places. Based on sketches, they are painted on wood, spilling across the frames, and are reworked over several years.	Jonathan Miller relocates Shakespeare's comedy to a 1930s world of rundown socialites with Princess Di-style lovers mirrored by faded aristocratic fairies. With Sylvester le Touzel, Angus Wright and Toby Jones.	Disney's classic becomes a live-action movie with Joely Richardson, Jeff Daniels and Glenn Close in Anthony Powell's outlandish costumes as Cruella De Vil doing for dogs what she did for rabbits in <i>Fatal Attraction</i> .	Plácido Domingo celebrated his Silver Jubilee at Covent Garden with his British Wagner debut, singing Siegmund in Richard Jones's production of <i>Die Walküre</i> , conducted by Bernard Haitink.
critical view	Bryan Robertson revelled in "an intensely enjoyable and engrossing experience... life-enhancing and directly connected with the great humanist tradition." "Ravishing... the best paintings by one of the most indisputably great modern painters," gasped the <i>Mail</i> on Sunday. "A marvellously abandoned painter whose brilliance as a colourist enables his work to sing," gloried <i>The Times</i> . "Works like this come not from the head but from the heart" exulted <i>The Telegraph</i> .	Paul Taylor berated a "joyless" production, "the most thuddingly prosaic gloss on the English class system you've ever witnessed." "Only a fool could find it serious, revealing or funny," thundered the <i>FT</i> . "By the end Miller's vision is showing a touch of glaucoma: fuzziness, but there is bright clarity enough in the centre to satisfy," nodded <i>The Times</i> . "Clear as a bell... Miller's observant, inventive class comedy delights," nodded <i>The Standard</i> . "A triumph," squealed the <i>Mail</i> .	Adam Mars-Jones was haunted by the spectre of <i>Home Alone</i> but admitted to "comic" and "thrilling" moments. "Hasn't director Stephen Herek seen <i>Babe</i> ? Patchy," growled <i>Time Out</i> . "Audiences will have a reasonably good time. Does the film bring all the rewards of its predecessor? Unfortunately, no," barked the <i>Times</i> . "The Christmas treat with spots on," yelled the <i>Standard</i> . "Close must have studied at the Fenella Fielding school for roccoco lip movement," parried the <i>FT</i> .	Edward Seckerson was mightily impressed. "He sang splendidly... His final moments with Siegmund were quite extraordinarily beautiful. You can't put a price on singing like that." "As beautifully sung a Siegmund as you could hope to hear. He entered fully into both the spirit and the letter of the unconventional production," cheered <i>The Times</i> . "Will he please stop acting like a superstar, settle down for a couple of months and give us his Tristan?" prayed <i>The Telegraph</i> .
on view	At the Hayward Gallery, South Bank; SE1 (0171-960 4242), to 23 Feb.	Almeida Theatre, London N1 (0171-359 4404), to 1 Feb.	At every available cinema screen in the land. Parents beware: the merchandise is in every store.	A one-off performance, alas.
our view	An overwhelmingly powerful, deeply emotional experience. Compulsory viewing.	Mostly unfunny, with no poetic magic. Like an Esther Williams movie without water.	The dogs don't speak but the product placement is first-rate, ie Daniels and Richardson read <i>The Independent</i> .	A typically musical performance from an artist who more than lives up to the hype.

NEXT WEEK: Four pages of arts, entertainment, Christmas services and walks in the Long Weekend. Plus: 14 days of TV in the Eye

THE TAILOR OF PANAMA

"a riotous, readable novel"

PETER MILLAR, *The Times*

le Carré



# From Eatanswill to Foot's last stand

Robin Cook listens to the shining wits of Westminster

The Literary Companion to Parliament edited by Christopher Silvester, Sinclair-Stevenson, £30 The Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations edited by Anthony Jay, Oxford, £15.99

Being a Member of Parliament is not a profession but an obsession. We work daily 12-hour shifts in its offices. We take three meals a day in its tea rooms and canteens. Our sense of reward is a speech well-received. Our sense of fun is a speech well-tackled.

Anyone who shares our obsession to the extent of producing 600 pages of memoirs about Parliament starts out with our prejudices behind him. I began by really wanting to admire the monumental fruits of Christopher Silvester's labour, but even a mutual obsession could not sustain my enthusiasm.

He produces some interesting facts for addicts of Trivial Pursuit – for instance, that the tea room consumed 224lbs of bacon rashers in an all-night sitting. But the overall effect is curiously lifeless and does not capture the passion, the venom or the grandeur of Parliament.

The first problem is that his *Companion* is not at all literary. I could find not any extract from the many ovals that flit through Parliament. Dickens is cited as a sketch writer, but there is no quotation from *Our Mutual Friend* of the satirical dash to take the mood of the nation in Central Lobby, or from *Pickwick Papers* about the election for the Borough of Eatanswill. Incredibly, Trollope has not a single entry, although no literary figure has written more about Parliament or appeared more famously as the favourite reading of Conservative Prime Ministers.

Silvester's chief sources are MPs writing diaries for their own entertainment; but people writing privately about their own obsession tend not to produce great literature. It is unnecessary for him to include a spectacularly tedious chapter on great bores when most chapters provide adequate proof that MPs can indeed be boring. The second problem is that Silvester appears to be under the impression that Parliament was suspended at the time of the Suez Crisis and never recovered. The half century in which the bulk of his potential buyers grew up is missing.

The chapter on ladies in Parliament



The Rights of a Seditious Poltroon: Paine is burned on a bonfire of his 'Rights of Man' stoked by Pitt. A lifted Dundas dances as Burke directs the merriment. Published 16 January, 1793 and taken from 'Edmund Burke: A Life in Caricature' by Nicholas K Robinson (Yale University Press, £30)

leaves the reader with the nagging suspicion that he regards that phrase as a contradiction in terms. Most of the quotations are about women in the Ladies' Gallery, with only two entries for the

period after the suffragettes succeeded. Yet, by anyone's standards, one of the dominant parliamentary figures of this century was Margaret Thatcher. It is impossible to understand the excessively

adversarial character of the Commons now without reference to her confrontational personality.

The chapter on "Great and Terrible Occasions" contains neither the fall of

the previous Labour government, otherwise remembered as Foot's Last Stand, nor the resignation speech of Margaret Thatcher. Yet everyone can agree that one of those events was

Great and the other Terrible, even though there may be different views as to which way round the descriptions fit.

No-one who was there on the day of Mrs Thatcher's last speech at the Despatch Box will forget how a weary, defeated woman was transformed into the familiar handbagger when she rounded on a heckler. One of the reasons she survived so long in office, despite dishing out a diet of unpopular policies, was that she could command the Commons. Conversely, one of the reasons why the present government is in terminal decline is that it is saddled with a PM who cannot even command the Commons. Yet the significance of Parliament as the crucible of our political system is lost among this encyclopaedia of gossip and trivia.

By contrast, Anthony Jay's *Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations* provides a sharp insight into the heat of political exchange. Mrs Thatcher is vividly portrayed, in Matthew Parris's sketch of her introduction into the House of Lords, as "a big cat detained briefly in a poodle parlour, sharpening her claws on the velvet". And the best of the past is here – Tom Paine, for example, more acerbic than any modern sketch writer, reporting the failure of Burke in debate: "He rose like a rocket, he fell like a stick".

Yet the collection is also absolutely contemporary with generous entries for both Tony Blair and John Major. Iain Macleod's entries express better than any others the wit and invective of debate. How could an opponent recover from this charge: "I cannot help it if every time the Opposition are asked to name weapons they pick a boomerang?"

The success of the *Dictionary* is that most entries were intended for publication, and many are polished gems. This is indeed a companion with which to while away a late-night sitting. I would not be entirely surprised to detect some of the quotations being recycled to adorn the occasional speech. There is, after all, no greater praise a parliamentarian can offer than a threat to plagiarise.

## Crash test dummies

Sean French prefers high-tech hardware to cardboard characters

Airframe by Michael Crichton, Century, £16.99

The curious thing about Michael Crichton is that he isn't much good at the things best-selling writers are supposed to be good at. He has almost no interest in story-telling or plot construction. The climactic twist in each of his last three thrillers (which all concern companies on the verge of a big deal) depends on the pivotal event being accidentally recorded: by a security camera in *Rising Sun*, by an answering machine in *Disclosure*, by a camcorder in *Airframe*. He can't write action scenes; unfortunately, he writes them anyway, and the example in the new book is both tedious and almost laughably irrelevant.

His gift is for technical and bureaucratic processes, the very things that most literary novelists skip on, and he manages to make them exciting. This can have some peculiar results. The really thrilling, page-turning part of *Jurassic Park* was the first 150 pages or so, with all the technical details about how dinosaur DNA might be

farmed and replicated, and the interesting use of chaos theory (botched in the film) to explain why the dinosaur theme park was likely to go wrong. It was the last half of the book, in which cardboard dinosaurs pursued cardboard characters, that was barely readable.

This is why Michael Crichton's finest project is *ER*, a television show that has eliminated the traditional structure of stories and relationships and is based almost entirely on the absorbing detail of what goes on in a casualty department. A team of brilliant writers and actors added one more ingredient – living human beings, a species hitherto absent from Crichton's work.

Crichton also has a canny, often unpleasant, instinct for dark primitive fears: of genetic engineering in *Jurassic Park*; of foreigners in *Rising Sun*; of powerful women in *Disclosure*; and in *Airframe*, our fear of flying.

Even those of us who know that flying is far safer than

cycling to work will feel our pulses quicken on page two: "She clutched at her daughter, pulling her close. Now it felt like the plane was going straight down, and then suddenly it was going up, and her stomach was pressed into the seat."

*Airframe* begins with a mysterious incident on a passenger flight that leaves three passengers dead and the aircraft interior almost totally destroyed. The explanation must be found in a week, or the plane's manufacturer will collapse.

Contrary to some reports, this is not a thriller about air safety. It is a thriller about the perception of air safety, which is a much more interesting and complicated subject. Consequently, Crichton's leading character is not the chief of the accident investigation but Casey Singleton, the Quality Assurance rep on the Incident Review Team. She must not only find out what went wrong but deal with the irresponsible press reaction. This relatively con-

tained accident draws in the plane's manufacturer, its clients all over the world, the company's workers and the media.

Crichton's account of the relationship between them is awesomely impressive. He may describe a woman as if he has only read about one in a manual, but he is wonderfully particular about what exactly happens in an investigation, the way things work and, just as important, the way things don't work.

The weirdly gifted Crichton can make the question of document storage seem exciting and a night-time chase through an aircraft hangar seem boring. There is a brilliant three-page scene on how to be interviewed on television.

The final twist is a bit of a disappointment, especially if, like me, you have read the news item which gave Crichton the idea. But the pages of my copy have gone puffing from being read for too long in the bath: a far more telling sign of approbation.

## Gross indecency

Michael Arditti convicts the '50s Establishment of vicious bigotry

Heterosexual Dictatorship by Patrick Higgins, Fourth Estate, £18.99

Anyone who has ever heard the dread words "I shall now read the minutes of the last meeting" will have reason to fear Patrick Higgins's blow-by-blow account of the workings of the Wolfenden Committee. Fortunately, these fears are sooo dispelled by Higgins's account of a key, if largely symbolic, moment in the liberalisation of British sexual mores.

Higgins is concerned to challenge many myths about the committee and, in particular, about its chairman who, since his death, has been elevated to the pantheon of secular saints. Higgins paints a picture of a craven careerist, toadying to official witnesses, while barely courteous to the "criminal" Peter Wildeblood. Although in a minority, he refused to recommend a gay age of consent of 18.

Those looking for a working definition of the British Establishment could do worse than take the lawyers, doctors, churchmen, MPs, academics and one peer who made up the committee. Even the most

"liberal" peer, Goronwy Rees, wrote a series of articles in *The People* about his friend, Guy Burgess, in which he described him as a Jekyll and Hyde with "depraved tastes". In fact, it was Rees himself who exhibited the split personality, a lone voice of tolerance in committee while demanding a witch-hunt in the tabloid press.

Some of the committee's antics resemble a Whitehall farce. To safeguard their female clerical workers, they decided on the euphemisms Huntleys (homosexuals) and Palmers (prostitutes). Wolfenden opposed hearing evidence from homosexuals themselves for fear of attracting exhibitionists. He had no idea of the numbers of men involved and refused to accept the Kinsey Report.

Higgins documents the virulent homophobia of the period. True to its 19th-century model, homosexuality was regarded as a disease by liberals and reactionaries alike. The distinction lay between reformers who saw it as a mental disorder that needed

treatment and opponents who considered it an infection that would corrupt society. The church maintained its antagonism, the Bishop of Rochester even declaring that he found himself "feeling more sympathy with a curate or scout-master who has offended with a boy than with two men misbehaving together."

Press coverage, with a few exceptions, was grossly indecent. The rush for advertisers and circulation battles led to coarsening of sensibilities in both journalists and readers. Parliamentary prejudice ran rife; although, remarkably, the young Margaret Thatcher proved to be a constant supporter of reform. In the Lords, Archbishop Ramsay's admission that he knew the difference between oral and anal sex led one peer to claim that he had "turned *Hansard* into a piece of pornography."

In the second part, Higgins provides extensive documentation of 1950s homophobia. This section is less analytical – and less effective – than the first, consisting largely of short

reports of court cases, which come to resemble a relentless diet of the seamy Sunday newspapers. There are sad tales of blackmail and extortion, evidence of the lengths to which lonely men would go to obtain a little love. The behaviour of one Gloucester Cathedral curate reads like a *Le Carré* spy tale. We learn of a vicar who asked an 18-year-old to view his model railway and a farmer whose teenage boyfriend slept over because they were "crazy about milking". They, like so many others, were found guilty.

Reading this material demonstrates how radically society has changed in the past 40 years, and yet the 1950s distinction between the good homosexual (heterosexual in all but sex) and the bad homosexual (challenging, promiscuous) remains. Higgins belongs to the activist, street-theatre rather than tea-with-John-Major, ideology. But anyone who considers the title unwarranted in a liberal democracy will have thought again by the end of the book.

'Far and away the best autobiography of the year' – *The Independent*

## ROBERT ROBINSON MEMOIRS

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Out of to  
Geoff Dyer from

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A  
week  
in  
books

In early December, a newsprint blizzard swamps us with advice on which books to buy for Christmas. Canny punters know that this sage counsel adds up to no more than log-rolling – either for bookshop chains, or to boost the egos of those hothouse flowers who fill books-of-the-year slots. Yet sceptical consumers at this time crave an antidote to hype. This column tries to fill that gap, and sweetens the unseasonal vinegar with some ideas for better buys.

It would (for example) be a crying shame if anyone who wants a guide in pop opted for the nerdy lists in *Q's Encyclopedia of Rock Stars* (Dorling Kindersley) rather than the wit and nous of *The Rough Guide to Rock* (Penguin). But sometimes hype-evasion has more in it than value than merit.

There's nothing wrong with *Longitude* (Fourth Estate), Dava Sobel's tale of nautical skulduggery, except that it's a linguistic article decked out in hard covers. The cornucopia of breakthroughs in John Carey's *Faber Book of Science* could see readers right through into 1997.

Sometimes, though, a gulf in quality hints at a deeper cultural chasm. Sir Roy Strong's overpriced *Story of Britain* (Hutchinson) delivered insular heritage history while Norman Davies's *Europe: a history* (Oxford) brought a continent to pulsating life – for a tanner less.

The familiar name also proved the novice choice in crime fiction. Colin Dexter's *Death Is Now My Neighbour* (Macmillan) revealed its author's limits: retire Morse and hire any deft whodunnit by Reginald Hill (HarperCollins). You can also forget plodding John Grisham (*The Runaway Jury*, Century) while Scott Turow has his latest thinking-person's blockbuster on the shelves (*The Laws of Our Fathers*, Viking).

Even readers daft enough to buy books by actors need a helpful hint or two: for instance, about Alec Guinness's *My Name Escapes Me* (Hamish Hamilton) – so slight, you're amazed it doesn't float away like this-tidown. However, even thespians can manage *gravitas* at times: see Claire Bloom's riveting memoir, *Leaving a Doll's House* (Virago).

Bloom transforms her emotional knots into readable prose. No such concern bothers Adam Phillips, the decade's smartest shrink, in *Monogamy* (Faber). What over these coy riddles teach, it isn't *Emotional Intelligence* (Bloomsbury): Daniel Goleman's humane account of why nice guys finish first.

I meant to close this Xmas blacklist with a dig at Melvyn Bragg's *Dark Ages* doornost, *Crede* (Hodder). After all, people who hanker for a long dull chronicle set in the remote past can always read Tony Blair's *Desert Island Book*: Scott's *Frankie*. Then I sat opposite someone who was not only immersed in Bragg's 7th-century quagmire, but 95 per cent of the way through *Soppy* Yuletide thoughts returned. Better, surely, to cherish an imperfect book than none at all.

Boyd Tonkin

# Dis-Consulate at Waterloo

Does Euro-integration have its roots in the Napoleonic wars? Amanda Foreman reports

How far is European integration from the road to Waterloo? This is the real question behind Alistair Horne's study of Napoleon's decline and Gregor Dallas' account of the 1815 Congress of Vienna. Their answer is – not very far at all.

Horne's *How Far From Austerlitz* (Macmillan, £20) is foremost a gripping narrative of Napoleon's downward spiral from Emperor to exile. He portrays his hero as a proud and complicated man whose far-reaching ambition blinded him to his challenges at close range.

He was born Napoléon Bonaparte in 1769, the second son of a minor Corsican family. Napoleon swiftly rose through the ranks of the French revolutionary army to become a general before he was 25. At 30, after successful campaigns in Italy and Egypt he mounted a coup d'état against the Directory and proclaimed himself First Consul.

By 1807, Napoleon directly ruled more than 44 million people. The French empire stretched from Hamburg to Rome, and the rest of Europe – except Britain – was either marshalled into Kingdoms under his numerous family or yoked into his Continental System. So, asks Horne, what went wrong?

His explanation lies with Napoleon's psychology. The Emperor was so dazzled by his triumph at Austerlitz that he refused to listen to Talleyrand's counsel of moderation and imposed the harsh terms on the defeated Allies. His arrogance forced France onto a footing of continuous war with the rest of Europe and made her eventual exhaustion inevitable. By 1812, when Napoleon invaded Russia, he was without friends abroad and vulnerable at home. The Russian winter decimated his 600,000 strong army and the Third Coalition easily routed the survivors.

Horne has an unrivalled ability to transform military manoeuvres into striking cinematic images. Few historians today can match the force and breadth of his vision. In so far as his book concentrates on Napoleon it is a triumph and should be required reading for anyone interested in French history.

The only quibble is with Horne's somewhat forced parallels between Napoleon and Hitler. Of course there are superficial similarities; yes, Napoleon and Hitler were both geographical outsiders in their countries, and both invaded Russia on 22 June. But Napoleon liberated; Hitler enslaved. Napoleon marched into Russia with a single army. Hitler invaded on three fronts. He also expected help from the Finns, and when his army halted outside Moscow it was to adopt a defensive position – a tactic that benefits from winter conditions.

In his epilogue, Horne directly addresses the "British Eurosceptics of the 1990s" and advises them to accept the necessity of European integration. Europe's coalitions prove that isolated powers "are usually doomed." This contention raises two issues. First, his analogy between modern European integration with old-fashioned military co-operation is a false one. Britain has participated in European military coalitions since the Crusades. It does not follow that Eurosceptics desire to remain outside the ERM would leave Britain "doomed."

Second, it is not clear whether the anti-Bonaparte coalitions played any meaningful part in Napoleon's defeat. The First Coalition between Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain and Britain collapsed in 1796, leaving Britain isolated. The Second Coalition lasted for three years to 1802 and again Britain was isolated, the Third was barely more than a name before 1812, and for most of the war Britain struggled on her own with almost every port in Europe closed to her. Until Russia's triumph, the only notable successes against Napoleon were achieved by the Royal Navy and by Wellington in Spain.

Gregor Dallas's *1815: The Road to Waterloo* (Richard Cohen Books, £25) begins with the Third Coalition meeting to discuss the dis-

memberment of Napoleon's empire at the Congress of Vienna. The French monarchy was restored. The map of Europe was brutally redrawn without regard to nationalities, and the eight signatories agreed on a system of co-operation. Although Dallas doesn't address the Eurosceptics of the 1990s personally, many of his remarks are clearly pointed in their direction. The Congress of Vienna was, in his opinion, akin to "a parliamentary assembly of the states of Europe", and remains one of the great achievements of the 19th century.

Dallas is not as elegant a writer as Horne, but he combines a mastery of detail with a vivid, almost racy style. He makes a technical subject – the diplomacy of Metternich, Talleyrand, Castlereagh, and Tsar Alexander I – extraordinarily compelling. But his enthusiasm for the Congress goes too far. He misrepresents Castlereagh as a proto-Euro-integrationist although the Foreign Secretary went to Vienna simply to preserve peace in Europe by maintaining the balance of power. As evidence that "within days" of arriving Castlereagh had "become a European", Dallas cites his hope that co-operation between Great Powers would give them the "efficiency and almost the simplicity of a single state".

Castlereagh never envisaged a united or integrated Europe. His concern was the defence of existing frontiers. Metternich and Alexander I on the other hand wanted to defend aristocratic institutions. In practice this meant intervention to crush independence movements in Europe and smother dissent at home. Britain's refusal to take an active part in these counter-revolutionary efforts soon isolated her. In any case, "co-operation" degenerated into rivalry and the Congress soon fell apart. Its lasting legacy to Europe was insurgent nationalism.

One of the participants at the Congress was Admiral Sir Sidney Smith. He had travelled at his own expense to lobby ministers for the total abolition of the Slave Trade. His life is the subject of an outstanding biography, *A Thirst for Glory* by Tom Pocock (Aurum Press, £19.95). Smith – a true English eccentric who styled himself in Turkish costume and ate rats believing they were cleaner than pigs, never received the honours he

desired or deserved. Nelson's victory at Trafalgar cast an ineradicable shadow over his own exploits. Yet Smith was responsible for driving the French out of the Middle East. Napoleon said of him, "that man made me miss my destiny." Smith had many faults including vanity and a fatal tendency to melodrama. He was reckless to the point of insanity. But he was also a superb tactician and the first person to recognise the potential of Robert Fulton's designs for torpedoes and submarines. Pocock claims that Smith's reputation would be much higher today if he had not been such a difficult and unpopular colleague. At last, thanks to Pocock, rehabilitation is surely round the corner.

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Napoleon brooding on defeat by Paul Hippolyte Delaroche

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## Hartebeeste, mio, with love from Dearduck

Charles Nicholl wonders whether Malcolm Lowry should have written more books and fewer letters

Sursus Corda! The Collected Letters of Malcolm Lowry, Vol II: 1946-57 edited by Sherrill E Grace, Cape, £40

A writer's collected letters are a curious monument, occupying an ill-defined space between the life and the works. They are not quite biography and not quite literature but sometimes seem like a giant, ongoing rough draft.

Malcolm Lowry's voluminous letters are fascinating in this way: rapid, specific, full of raw detail. They can seem totally unguarded, but are probably not. Lowry was an instinctive performer, and his personal letters were written with an ear half-cooked to posterity. A letter to his wife here begins "Hartebeeste mio" and ends "All Love, Dearduck": are we eavesdropping on marital intimacy, or did he know that even his pet-names would one

day be read and judged as text? Sherrill E Grace's edition of his letters, *Sursus Corda!*, now completed with this second volume, is almost literally a monument. With 1700 pages, it contains about 1000 letters and manuscripts written from 1926 to 1957. It is certainly exhaustive, and sometimes exhausting. One does not quite get "Two pints Gold Top please", but had such a note survived it would duly be here, with a brief biographical sketch of the milkman.

This isn't just the good bits: it's everything. The collection conveys a sense of huge, squandered verbal energy. As Professor Grace points out, Lowry should have written more books and fewer letters. It

also permits a growing familiarity. One is regaled by an almost palpable conversational style: fluent, allusive, button-holing, a desperate gin-fuelled geniality one step away from despair. "Sursus corda" (lift up your hearts), was a favourite sign-off line of Lowry's, and there is something strangely uplifting about these letters, even if the uplift is more adrenal than spiritual.

On the surface this is a less picturesque period of Lowry's brief life. The first volume had a certain lachrymose flair – Lowry the black sheep, the drifter, the literary barfly, the womaniser – and some vivid glimpses of his life in Mexico in the mid-1930s, the background of his masterpiece, *Under the Volcano*. We

begin in 1946, with *Under the Volcano* completed and about to be published. Lowry is in his mid-thirties, settled happily if tempestuously with his second wife, the former Hollywood starlet Marguerite Bonner. They are briefly in Haiti, but most of the time at the "beach shack" they owned at Dollarton on the coast of British Columbia.

These Canadian years are full of literary struggle, financial difficulties, black-outs, injuries. Lowry found it increasingly difficult to crystallise his writing into printable form. Eddying drifts of half-formed ideas, synopses and treatment fill the letters. They will become the brooding, posthumous works like *Dark as the Grave Wherein My*

*friend is Laid*. We catch them here still raw, attached to his own life. He maps out the mood of the story that became *October Ferry to Gabriola*: "I want to convey that it isn't alcoholism in the true sense but a kind of death, or half life". What he is conveying is his own life, not yet translocated into fiction.

In 1954, Lowry left the Americas for the last time. He was in bad shape physically and mentally. The following year, in London, he was hospitalised and wrote to his New York publisher, Albert Erskine: "the reaper is omnipresent but it is by no means grim for all that. In fact I spend most of my time shirtless on the cricket pitch in the dew". He delayed the reaper on this

occasion too: this is a saga of self-destruction, but also brute strength. He died, aged 48, in a rented house in Sussex – "by misadventure" as the coroner found, by the ravages of chronic alcoholism in reality – in June 1957. His last letter is to the playwright Harvey Burt, enthusiastic about a recent trip to Grasmere. It ends with a plangent quotation from Wordsworth's *Prelude*: "Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwell/A ministrant of your own was ours". This seems to be a marvellous summation of Lowry's richly errant life, among Mexican dives and Canadian shacks and all the other "lowly cottages" which he chose in preference to the comfortable mansions of his birth and class.

## Out of touch at the typewriter

Geoff Dyer finds signs of stiffness in a tour of tactile pleasures

Touch by Gabriel Josipovici, Yale University Press, £19.95

Italo Calvino didn't get round to writing about touch in *Under the Jaguar Sun*, his proposed book on the five senses. Could Gabriel Josipovici's "very personal book" help make good this lack? It felt promising. That a wide range of material – Chaplin, Chardin, Chaucer – could be touched on in relatively few pages (150) suggested that this essay might well display the qualities associated with the master: tactility of ideas, the ability to render the cerebral as sensation, and feeling as thought.

Such hopes do not persist long, but there are some nice touches: an informative history of the pilgrimage as "a journey into the experience of distance itself"; a touching comparison of a photograph of the author's grandparents with Rembrandt's "The Jewish

Bride," a section on Chardin that makes one see just how weird are these paintings of extreme temporal suspense.

The most revealing chapter begins with Josipovici considering what it means to have "a good touch" at sport. The terrible thing about tennis, he observes, is the way that errors haunt you – but by dwelling on these missed chances you risk that "dread tightening of the arm" which is a premonition of defeat. This was Borg's great strength: "a point played seemed to be over and forgotten as soon as it was done, leaving him totally free to concentrate on the next one." For his part Josipovici kept playing football "long after [he] should have given up the game" and ended up wrecking his knee. He then took up Aikido where he learned that the ideal state is the

Borg-like one in which "you are both utterly relaxed and utterly concentrated." To Western minds this might appear contradictory but Josipovici is adamant that this is exactly how one feels when swimming, running or "writing well."

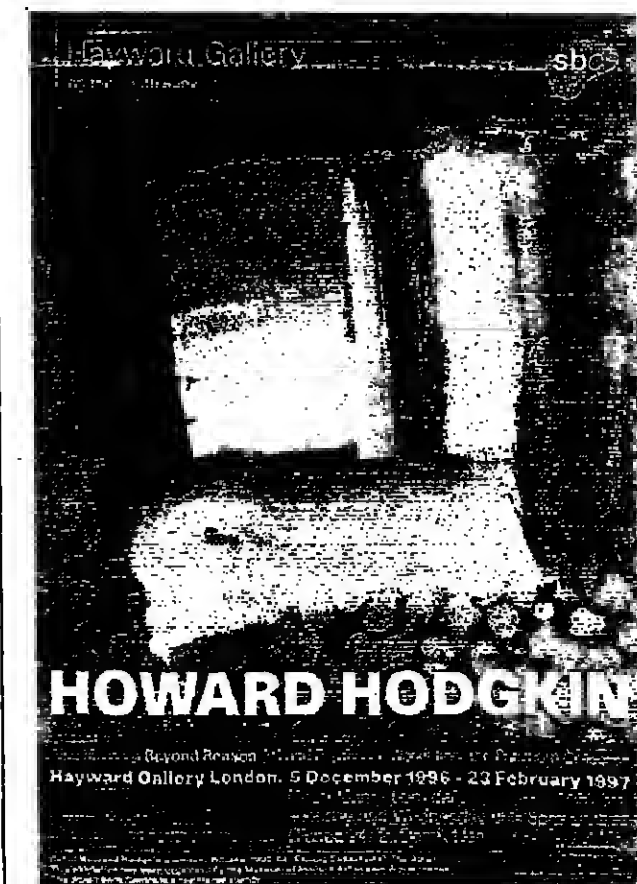
And with that – precisely because he is so right – he hobbles himself. For Josipovici's distinguishing characteristic as a writer is that he is so uptight. Looking at that photo of his grandparents, he notes their "slight stiffness" before the camera, but they are supple as yogi compared with their grandson. His prose is not stiff. It's petrified. Even in his more relaxed moments he lacks what he terms "kinetic melody." Compared with Camus's lyrical evocations of swimming in Algeria, Josipovici's meditation on the pleasure of

doing so in Egypt is chlorinated, wheezing. His account of walking on the South Downs ("when there is only a mild breeze blowing, when there is springy turf under foot") is similarly stifling.

There is a pompous edge, too, to much of the commentary, signalled by his fondness for the all-knowing "of course" ("Marandi of course is the great exception"). Part of the reason for this is that Josipovici is an academic, and the pipe-smoke staleness of the lecture hall is never far away. It is amazing that so much time in so short a book is spent holding forth to students. Genius, he observes at one point, is "nothing more than the ability to push an insight to its limits and not be deflected either by laziness or conventional wisdom." That's as maybe, but Josipovici's insights

are far too limited and are not pushed anything like far enough to qualify.

In a way common among devotees of ossified experimentalism, he is also deeply conventional. He is one of those writers for whom the apotheosis of purity only when he types out the sentence. "I am writing." On this occasion – after a bit of verbal foreplay in the Prologue – he holds out until the penultimate chapter before succumbing to what might be termed the *petite mort de l'écriture*: "Over my notebook I sit hunched up. Over my typewriter, a little more upright. My hand moves over the page. My fingers hit the keys. I am writing." Aah! In the context of a book about touch, what can one say except that it is numb and numbing?







## Paperbacks

By Christopher Hirst and Lucasta Miller

**The Day Before Yesterday: Five Million Years of Human History** by Colin Tudge (Pimlico, £9.99) Frightening and fascinating in equal measure, this beautifully written mix of eco-history and geopolitics argues that our leaders should be taking a very long view of the future of our environment – indeed, that one million years is not an unreasonable unit of political time. It also shows how swiftly and irreversibly global change can take effect, pointing out that if CFCs had been invented in the *laissez-faire* epoch of Victorian industrialism, the end of the world would today be unquestionably nigh.

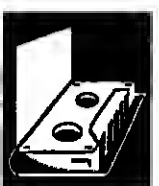
**Dreams of Love and Modest Glory** by Joan Lingard (Mandarin, £6.99) Big historical novel, taking in the Russian Revolution, two world wars and the collapse of Communism. It opens in 1913 with the double wedding of twin sisters from Aberdeen. One marries a tsarist count, the other a Latvian intellectual, and their love stories open out into a family saga, marked by secrets and lies, spanning three generations. This is a good, effortless read, instantly involving and unpretentious.

**Byzantium: The Decline and Fall** by John Julius Norwich (Penguin, £9.99) Anyone seeking a reading project this Christmas will not do better than Lord Norwich's acclaimed trilogy about Byzantium. This dazzling conclusion (from

Easter 1081 to 29th May 1453) maintains the same scorching pace and penchant for intriguing detail as the first two volumes (*Byzantium: the Early Centuries* and *Byzantium: The Apogee* republished at £9.99 each).

**The People of Providence** by Tony Parker (Eland, £9.99) A sequence of 49 in-depth interviews from a down-at-heel London housing estate may seem an unusual choice by a publisher who specialises in travel books. But this is an extraordinary work. Parker, who died this year, spent five years on the project. First published in 1983, it merits comparison with Mayhew's *London Labour* and the *London Poor* for depth and clear-eyed sympathy.

**The Plastic Tomato Cutter** by Michael Curtin (Fourth Estate, £6.99) In alternate chapters, two narrators describe how the Sixties transformed a small Irish community. One is Mr Yendall, the martinet of a fusty gents' outfitters. The other is Tim Harding, an over-educated snooker champ who ekes a living out of Paget, his one-man agency for the treatment of nicotine addicts. Yendall's world is turned upside-down by long-haired pop groups and the disappearance of the half-crown. Harding has a more serious problem: consanguinity. He falls for a beauty who turns out to be his sister. Curtin's inventive, beguiling imbrolio is a delight from start to finish.



Books you listen to

**Humour** is the best-selling category of audio hooks. *Talkies Best Comedy Award* went to *The Long Johns* (Laughing Stock, c 1hr, £5.99), John Bird and John Fortune's brilliant mock interviews satirising political cynicism and expediency from the Rory Bremner Show. *Blackadder's Christmas Carol* (BBC, c 1hr, £5.99) turns Dickens's story on its head with predictably hilarious results.

Christina Hardyment

# Powers of intelligence

Donald Cameron Watt welcomes a new generation of spy-watchers

In six new books on spying and the gathering of intelligence there are no real duds, despite the efforts of the publishers to misrepresent Leslie Collitt's biography of Marcus Wolf, *Spymaster*, the real life of Karl's his moles and the East German Secret Police (Robson £16.95). In fact, Wolf headed the GDR's Foreign Intelligence Service, not its secret police. Among the others, Bradley Smith's *Sharing Secrets with Stalin* (University of Kansas Press, £27.95) is outstanding: a dyed-in-the-wool professional study of the intelligence aspects of the uneasy co-operation between the Big Three against Hitler. The rest include one biography, one fascinating account of a uniformed British intelligence-gathering agency, now defunct; and three different studies of other British agencies: the Secret Intelligence Service, the Government Codes and Ciphers Service and the Security Service, now acknowledged – rather than defined – by Act of Parliament.

It would be nice to think that all this marks the end of the persistent breach of the Official Secrets Act by a handful of writers echoing the whinges of disaffected anonymous secret servants, which has for so long passed as the record of British intelligence. A vain hope, I fear. But after Mark Urban's impressive catalogue of the great and the good among his informants in *UK Eyes Alpha* (Faber, £16.99), Michael Smith's trawling of the Public Record Office, *New Cloak, Old Dagger* (Gollancz, £20) and Michael Herman's serious, officially encouraged, efforts to provide the intelligence services with a theoretical underpinning, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* (Cambridge, £50, £16.95), the whinge-echoers should be the more easily recognisable.

Bradley Smith's previous study of Anglo-American wartime intelligence co-operation has already made the continuation of that co-operation a cliché of studies of the "Special Relationship". His gift for disinterring from the public records in London and Washington what the censors fondly believe to lie fathom-deep in their most secret



Marcus Wolf (centre, between his father and brother, Friedrich): "East German desk warrior"

repositories is legendary. *Sharing Secrets with Stalin* lacks Soviet sources; but its revelations of how the professional intelligencers of the Big Three coped with the conflict between their ideological suspicions of each other and their need for victory, and how the degree of exchange fluctuated as the military successes of each enhanced their standing in the eyes of their opponents, makes this a yardstick for the closeness of the East-West alliance. The British came off very badly. Smith's demonstration that even after Hiroshima, the US went on

supplying the Russians with top-level military intelligence on Japan makes nonsense of the contention that Hiroshima was the first shot in the Cold War.

In *Beyond the Front Line* (HarperCollins, £20), Tony Geraghty – ex-para and specialist in SAS derring-do – writes of Brimix, the former British Military Liaison Group with Soviet forces in East Germany. Their concentration on Soviet troop movements and military installations led to violent, potentially lethal, confrontations with Soviet or GDR security forces,

Serving only two-year tours of duty, they were bold, enterprising and unconventional. They also served the cause of peace by allaying fears of Soviet military build-ups and surprise attacks.

Leslie Collitt's title is an unnecessary nonsense. Unlike Karl, Smiley's opponent in Le Carré's televised trilogy, Marcus Wolf was an East German desk warrior, Moscow-trained and Moscow-appointed to head East German foreign intelligence. Collitt's sources are Stasi files and Wolf himself. Under him, East German intelligence agents

seduced their way into the heart of West German politics. Collitt's study is the most comprehensive so far available in English.

The journalists Mark Urban and Michael Smith complement each other. Urban's *UK Eyes Alpha* is compulsive reading on the Whitehall in-fighting between the secret services and Mrs Thatcher's mania for control. In *New Cloak, Old Dagger*, Smith is particularly good on Northern Ireland. Between them they lay many of the myths perpetuated by the literary buckets that catch dissent. *Afficionados* will need, to read both. Smith weakens his own solid research with some very dodgy historical sources, and Urban apparently believes his sources told him everything – a dangerous ploy in writing intelligence history. He has also talked to too many ex-CIA US nationalists whose *Who-needs-you-old-boy* Anglophobia has made him overly pessimistic about the future.

Common to these approaches is an inability to distinguish between military and political intelligence about other countries. By contrast with the other great powers in the first half of this century, Britain concentrated on the former as well as the latter. It made the security agencies arms of the Foreign Office, not the forces or the police. This raises the question of how much secret intelligence really counts in the overall political assessment of the external world.

It is to this that Michael Herman (among much else) directs himself. His indispensable *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* is based on the widest of reading, which he summarises with skill and clarity. What is available, however, is largely generated by American views of the US-Soviet confrontation. None of this is very helpful to the adaptation of intelligence work to the problems of a world still full of threats to Britain's interests. As our effective power dwindles, the need for reliable assessment and for political and public confidence in it increases. Secret intelligence may only constitute ten per cent of the total picture ten per cent of the time, as a hard-hitting, ex-diplomat, recently said. But its neglect will cost Britain treasure, let alone lives.

## A slave to liberal passions

Godfrey Hodgson dethrones a Founding Father

The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution by Conor Cruise O'Brien, Sinclair-Stevenson, £25

Three monuments dominate the Mall in Washington, celebrating the trinity of the American civil religion. A tall obelisk commemorates George Washington, father of American independence. A porticoed temple celebrates Lincoln, the renewer of the covenant. And a dome, reflected in the Tidal Basin, glorifies Thomas Jefferson, near-holy spirit of the American ideology.

Inside the Jefferson memorial, a number of texts were inscribed, including three about slavery: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slave is despotism. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free." The last sentence, taken from Jefferson's *Autobiography*, is incomplete. It continues, as Conor Cruise O'Brien points out, to state that "Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Native habit, opinion has drawn indelible lines of distinction between them."

The suppression of the second half is only a detail in the long campaign to conceal the awkward fact that the imperishable author of the ringing declaration that all men were created equal was not only a slave-owner but also a racist. Nor can this be brushed aside with the defence that he only reflected the prejudices of his time. George Washington did not share Jefferson's racism. Jefferson believed, as Washington did not, that there was no future for black people in the United States and he therefore advocated that freed slaves should be sent "back where they came from", in the phrase beloved of modern British racists.

The evidence O'Brien deploys has been painstakingly accumulated by a whole younger generation of American historians. It includes



Thomas Jefferson: "hypocritical"

HULTON GETTY

the fact that Jefferson tried to write into the laws of Virginia two proposals that were too strong even for his fellow slave-owners. One would have made it illegal for free Negroes to enter the state, or to stay there once freed. The other would have removed from "the protection of the laws" any white woman who bore a black man's child: an invitation to lynching.

Thanks to earlier southern historians, it is widely believed that Jefferson, although a slave-owner, wanted to abolish slavery. He did condemn slavery, and no doubt he hated it, if only because of the contradiction between his ideology of liberty and the reality of his life. But he went to great lengths to recapture and punish his own runaways.

Unlike Washington, he did not free his own slaves in his will, with the exception of four who were probably his own children. O'Brien accepts that we shall not know for certain whether Jefferson was the father of Beverley, Harriet, Madison and Estlin Hemings, the children of his servant Sally Hemings, until DNA testing has been carried out on their remains. The guardians of the Jefferson cult have always poured scorn

on the tale that Sally was Jefferson's mistress. But what is not in doubt is that Sally was the half-sister of Jefferson's own wife, daughter of a liaison between Martha Jefferson's father and a slave.

It is not the chief purpose of O'Brien's book to portray Jefferson as a racist or a hypocrite. Its theme is his role as the principal champion in America of the French Revolution. Although generations of Jeffersonians have portrayed their hero as a pillar of American democratic tradition far removed from the ferocity of Robespierre, O'Brien notes that Jefferson continued to defend the atrocities in France. After the king's execution, Jefferson as Secretary of State wrote to his *chargé d'affaires* in Paris that "were there but an Adam and an Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than as it now is."

Not until long after the Terror did Jefferson condemn the Revolution. And then, suggests O'Brien, one significant factor was Robespierre's proposal, in response to the slave rebellion in Haiti, to emancipate the slaves in all French and British colonies.

"How is it," Dr Johnson asked, "that we hear the loud-est yelps for liberty from the

drivers of negroes?" The remark has usually been dismissed as a cheap shot from a resentful Tory. But O'Brien suggests there may indeed have been a connection between the cult of Liberty in Virginia and slavery. Liberty to white Virginians included the liberty to own slaves.

Nothing can now change the fact, he believes, that the US will increasingly be a multi-racial society. The mainstream will therefore soon eject Jefferson from the American trinity. He will be left to that minority who defend white supremacy and States' Rights. Both suspects in the Oklahoma City bombing claimed him as an inspiration. Timothy McVeigh, when arrested, was wearing a T-shirt inscribed "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

The traditional view of Jefferson is that he was a passionate advocate of liberty for all trapped in the position of owning slaves. O'Brien brings to Jefferson his suspicion of the harm done by revolutionary rhetoric in England and his sympathy for Edmund Burke's negative view of the French Revolution. Making allowance for that, he has put the torch of his persuasive gifts to the evidence heaped up by revisionist historians. Together they have scorched the marble statesman of the Tidal Basin. The questions about Jefferson's ideological legacy raise questions about the nature of US civil religion – and the extent to which it extends its offer of equality to those who are not white North Americans.

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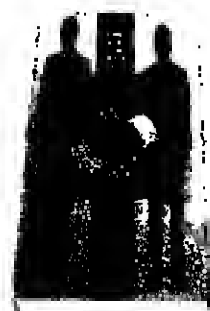
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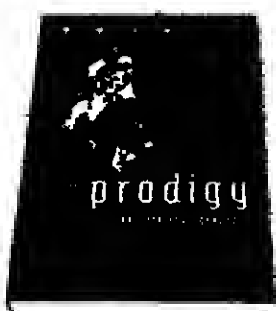
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# travel & outdoors

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## How many were in St Ives?

Harriet O'Brien, Travel Writer of the Year, enjoys the quiet of Cornwall out of season



The view from the Tate Gallery café of Porthmeor beach, one of the windiest and most dramatic parts of St Ives

PHOTOGRAPH: HARRIET O'BRIEN

It was the pig that did it. And a pot. Yet when I go back to St Ives next December it won't be only because of them. Big seas, big winds, a luminous quality of light, and art – living, as well as hung on walls – are all part of the equation. Forget sunshine, sandcastles and ice-cream on the beach; Cornwall out of season is inspiring, exhilarating – and half empty.

It was doubtless due to the lack of visitors that the pig was so pleased to see us. We came across her as we were walking over the cliffs beyond St Ives last week. Emitting small squeals of delight, she squelched hastily across her muddy enclosure to greet us, and to be admired. Her pink snout whiffed against the wire fence as she preselected her ears to be scratched. Great waves pounded the rocks below us, and she seemed to capture the spirit of the place: an open friendliness in total contrast to the wildness of the landscape and the elements.

At this time of year there is scope for the people (as well as the animals) of St Ives to stop and chat. An explanation from a shopkeeper about the finer points of Cornish honey might meander gently on to some considered advice as to where to see the most dramatic cliff scenery, then take a sharp right angle and develop into a discussion about local opinion of the Tate Gallery. This opened in St Ives in June 1993 and, rather than getting a predicted 70,000 visitors a year, has been averaging 200,000. The Tate, understandably, is a popular topic. "Oh, it's been fairly good for business," the hokey man remarked in quiet understatement. "It attracts a steady stream of visitors even at times like this when St Ives would otherwise be pretty much closed down. And yes, most of us do like it. Very much. But then there are so many artists here anyway."

It was a local potter who made my pot: a tall earthenware vase, its glaze subtly shot through with the mellow colours of the cliffs in changing light. Reminiscent,

I couldn't help grandly thinking, of the works of Bernard Leach. It sat in a shop window alongside pictures by resident painters, and little bits of knick-knackery: glass ornaments of cute cats, and quaint pottery figures. Like St Ives itself, which manages to cater for both a summer beach brigade and an influx of gallery-goers, there was something for everyone.

To see many of the paintings, ceramics, and sculptures that transformed the little harbour town from a sleepy fishing village into a significant art centre, you go to the Tate. This is not simply an ersatz arm of the modern art gallery in London. The exhibits here, many of them important works, have strong associations with the area: ceramics by Bernard Leach and his Japanese colleague Shoji Hamada; wonderfully lit sculpture by Barbara Hepworth; and, of course, works by Ben Nicholson, Christopher Wood and Alfred Wallis. The oow-jegeodary meeting between Nicholson, Wood and Wallis is considered to have been the turning-point in the artistic fortunes of St Ives. (What, ooc wonders, did old sailor Wallis make of Nicholson and Wood when, on that famous visit to St Ives in August 1928, the young artists walked straight into his home, exclaiming about Wallis's naive paintings, having seen them by chance through the open door?) A special exhibition of Wood's works from 1923 to 1930 – when the artist was, hilariously, killed by a train in Salisbury – is currently on display. Yet there's more to the Tate than the art oo show. For a start, it's got ooc of the best cafés in town. Sipping a cappuccino from the vantage point here, you look down over the steep, cobbled alleyways of St Ives, and gaze over the biggeddy-piggledy mix of roofs. The building, in fact, holds as many surprises as the exhibits. Set opposite Porthmeor Beach, one of the windiest parts of the little town, it absorbs much of the mesmerising play of light from the sea scenery. Such reflections have the

strange, and slightly unnerving, effect of making everything seem like an exhibit, down to the cakes in the café and the other visitors. And, despite the quality of the art on the walls and in glass cases, you can't help feeling that one of the finest shows in the Tate is the view from the enormous picture window in the Loog Gallery, which frames the beach scene beyond.

The sea and wind were in fine form oo the day we were there. From the warmth of the gallery we watched a group of surfers scooting over the waves and enjoying some of the best (albeit chilly) conditions of the sport. A kite flier, though, provided the most spectacular performance. He caught the wind superbly. Gripping his strings tightly, he was sent skidding across the sand as his canopy leapt and ducked excitedly. Occasionally the force of it all took him right off the ground. It was as if he was lifted up by his own exhilaration.

Such displays of energy are a far cry from the small museum of Barbara Hepworth's sculpture, set in the artist's former home, where she died in a fire in her studio in 1975. There's an appropriately static quality here, as if time stopped then. In the little garden, also created by Hepworth, you walk among large bronzes of differing shapes at every angle, sitting stonically alongside exotic plants and foliage. A small path leads to her workshop; here smocks hang by the door and large blocks of stone still wait to be transformed.

You start to understand why Hepworth created her strange images when you walk along the cliffs west of St Ives. The area just around from Land's End is particularly rich in extraordinary formations of granite boulders that seem impossibly perched above sheer drops. To get there you have to walk through the Land's End complex. From the promotional literature and several critical reports, I had expected this would be something of a theme park gnomery. And

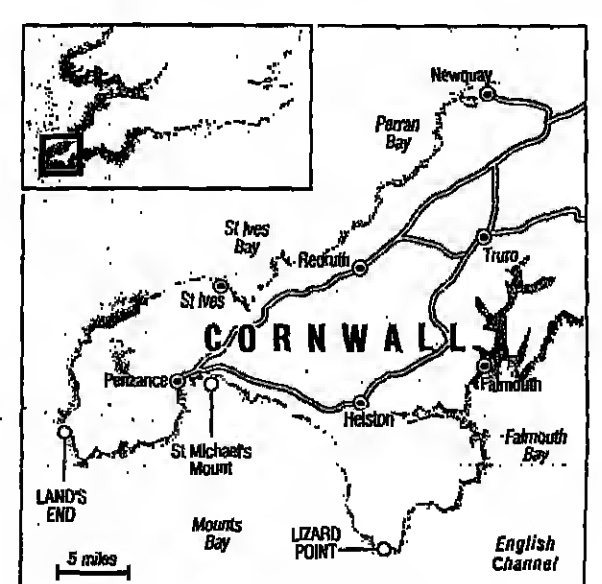
## Cornish essentials

**What to see:** The Tate (01736 796226) is open 11am-5pm Tuesday-Sunday. Adults £3, concessions £1.50, under 16s free when accompanied by an adult. The Christopher Wood exhibition runs until 20 April 1997. Barbara Hepworth's house (01736 796226) is open at the same time as the Tate. Adults £2, concessions £1.50, under-16s free when accompanied by an adult. Joint ticket with the Tate £4.50.

**Land's End** is open daily from 10am until sunset (01736 871501). Several shops and a few attractions – the Last Labyrinth, the Spirit of Cornwall, and Greah Farm – are open during the winter. Entrance to the complex and the

**shows:** adults £3 (including car parking), children £1, car parking only, £2.  
**Where to shop:** The Wills Lane Gallery on Wills Lane (01736 796297) has an impressive collection for serious buyers. The New Craftsman, 24 Fore Street (01736 795652), has a more eclectic mix of good paintings and pottery. **Who to ask:** The St Ives tourist office (01736 796297). The staff can supply details of buses to Land's End and other places beyond town.

**Where to stay:** St Ives is saturated with B&Bs. For details of those remaining open during the winter, contact the local tourist office (see above). Harriet O'Brien paid £18 per night at the Grey Mullet Guest House, 2



Bunkers Hill, in the centre of the town (01735 796635). **Where to eat:** Many restaurants are closed during the winter, but the Sloop Inn – dating from

1312 – on the harbour serves locally caught fish and other dishes provided you order before 8.30pm. Excellent fresh fish is also on offer at Peppers Pizzeria, 22 Fore Street.

## Frequent flyer? Prepare for delays

For the past year I have been tracking assiduously the punctuality of every flight I have taken. This may strike you as a singularly sad way to spend one's time, but the results confirm what many frequent travellers suspect – that the chances are more likely than not that your flight will be delayed. Of nearly 50 flights, two-thirds were delayed by anything from five minutes to three hours.



Simon Calder

The most consistently tardy carrier is British Airways, with an average delay of 20 minutes, but this reflects the fact that I have used it more than any other – and that BA has to cope with the two crowded home bases of Heathrow and Gatwick.

The survey begins with a 45-minute delay on a BA flight from Heathrow to Harare (ascribed to "missing passengers") and ends with a 15-minute late Chicago to Heathrow hop on American Airlines ("a few last-minute bags").

In between, explanations for delays have ranged from the catch-all "operational

difficulties" to the hardly more informative cause given bluntly by a Delta pilot between Atlanta and Orlando: "weather". In some ways it has been a good year; unlike the last couple, all the planes have landed at roughly the right airport on approximately the right day. There was just one aborted landing (on Cyprus Turkish Airlines at Antalya) and one curtailed take-off (a Caledonian Airways TriStar from Manchester to Mombasa). This flight turned out to be the most delayed of all, reaching Kenya three hours late. But this was in a summer when some passengers experienced delays of more than two

days – my colleague Wendy Berliner spent 53 hours in Orlando failing to travel with Airtours International to Gatwick. And whenever you, like me, are tempted to grumble about a modest delay, it is well worth remembering that we are extraordinarily privileged to be able to undertake relatively fast, relatively comfortable travel to the ends of the earth for implausibly low fares.

Some people, of course, are more privileged than others – notably those in the premium cabin. I am sorry to report that the "upgrade tie" that I carry habitually, and put on just before check-in, in the hope of a seat in business class, has worked just once.

Air 2000 does not appear in my survey, but it would feature high in any list of so-called out-dated names. Fortunately, readers have responded generously to their suggestions for a new name for the charter carrier to take it into the new millennium. A convoy of suggestions

as to what the airline could call itself once the year 2000 is over has been touching down over the past fortnight. Mr E Wright of Fleetwood recommends Millenair, while Mike Marshall of Bromsgrove has a name that will be valid for just 12 months – Air in 2000.

Peter Mair of London ootes that Air 2000 offers tall people extra legroom, and offers "Air 2001 – a Leg Space Odyssey". Mr Mair also says that another charter airline, Monarch, will book seats with extra space to tall travellers without the need to supply a doctor's letter, as required by Air 2000. "To achieve this, as soon as one is booked on a Monarch flight, phone 01582..."

The responsibility for this number being incomplete is mine, not Mr Mair's. When I tried the number he suggested, the airline confirmed that it will do its best to assign an emergency exit row to tall travellers – but refused me permission to publish the number you need to call to request assistance. It seems that

Monarch provides a useful service, but prefers its customers not to know about it.

Meanwhile, perhaps Air 2000 will grant an upgrade, or at least extra legroom, to those whose suggestions appear above.

As MPs disperse from Westminster for the last Christmas holiday of this parliament, some of them will be looking forward to foreign visits as part of a Commons select committee.

Writing in *Travel Weekly*, the Labour MP Nigel Griffiths reveals that members of the Defence Select Committee have bagged Ankara, Athens, Brussels, Gibraltar, Naples, New York, Paris and Washington DC. They did rather better than the Catering Committee: "Its one exotic trip consisted of a visit to British Rail's oohard services training school in Euston". One committee member who misheard news of the impending trip spent some time fondly anticipating a trip to Houston, Texas.

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# So who will sponsor the snow?

Stephen Wood on the arcane and inventive system that enriches - and cheapens - skiing

According to a survey of high earners in sport, published last week by *Total Sport* magazine, the racing driver Damon Hill was paid £7m this year. Anyone who has watched Grand Prix on television will have an idea where that sort of money comes from. This year, his car was a 200mph hillclimb for Rothmans cigarettes and Sanyo audio, among other products; previously, it has sold Labatt's beer, Canon cameras and Sega video games.

Motor racing is one of those sports that sponsors love. Unlike, say, World Cup football, where the advertising hoardings are just part of the background scenery, Grand Prix TV coverage focuses permanently on the promotional vehicles themselves, beaming sponsors' logos into hundreds of millions of homes around the world.

Why am I telling you all this in a skiing column? Because World Cup ski racing offers similar sponsorship potential. But if you watch BBC's *Ski Sunday*, which returns for a new season at 5.10pm tomorrow, you will struggle to see the sort of big brand names that adorn racing cars. There is plenty to read on the competitors' ski suits, skis and poles, even their goggles straps. (Ignore the racing bibs, which belong to the event sponsors.) But all the names, with few exceptions, are those of skiwear and ski equipment manufacturers. Ski racing is still run in the traditional way, by national skiing federations, with rules designed to prevent non-ski-industry sponsors from cheapening, and enriching, the sport.

When Martin Bell retired last year, he was the most successful British men's skier of recent times. But in his final two years of competition, when the British team was poorly sponsored, he didn't command a big salary: he made a loss. Like the rest of us, he paid to go skiing. So at the age of 31, he took his first nine-to-five job, as ski consultant to the *Daily Mail Ski Magazine*, to pay off his debts. The sponsorship rules ensure that even the top racers, says Bell, earn sums which are paltry in comparison with other sports: he doubts that Albert Tomba - a winner of Olympic golds, World Championships and World Cups and a big star in Italy - makes more than a million dollars a year.

The "Rules and Precisions" of the



Albert Tomba: big in Italy, but a low earner compared to other sports stars

International Ski Federation (FIS) on commercial markings comprise a long list of "doo's", and a dense specification of sites and measurements for permitted displays. The rules proceed from the assumption that manufacturers should be allowed to draw attention to the equipment they have supplied to competitors. The fact that the brand name must go on the equipment itself has had curious consequences - such

as the case of the ski-wax maker which went into the goggle business.

Martin Bell explains: "Briko was a ski-wax company which supplied the Italian team. They got some good results with the wax - but Briko couldn't get much publicity out of its success". A name on a wax package gets on TV exposure, so Briko started making goggles. They are a fairly cheap item - but a goggle strap is very visible on

TV. This seemed to open up the possibility of, say, Coca-Cola having a few pairs of goggles made up for competitors with its logo on the strap - but the International Ski Federation's article 211.2.3 closed that loophole by requiring that the straps be "as on products sold to the public".

The Federation does, however, permit a tightly controlled display of non-ski industry brand names, where the national

ski federations have done sponsorship deals. The British Ski Federation (BSF) has allowed its team members to have a "personal headband sponsor". Its illustration specifies "one logo, max size 50 sq cm, positioned at front, above national emblem". And having found no overall team sponsor, the BSF has also released the skiers its "Badge 4" site on the ski outfit, also of 50 sq cm. Unfortunately,

only one, Martin Bell's younger brother Graham, has found a sponsor. If you see his name on the caption on *Ski Sunday* tomorrow you may also, says the BSF's Fiona McLeod, be able to make out the names of Nielsen Holidays (personal headband sponsor) and Paul Mitchell hair care products (Badge 4).

Later in the *Ski Sunday* season you could also see the name of a Slovenian kitchen supplier flying across the screen. A curious wrinkle in the FIS rules - of which the Slovenian national team, among others, has taken full advantage - permits Nordic ski-jumpers to carry the names of non-ski industry sponsors on their skis.

Why do competitive skiers still allow national federations and national amateur status to restrict their earnings? Other sports, notably golf and tennis, have broken free of such controls, and World Cup skiing, with its extensive TV coverage and star names (on the Continent, if not in Britain), clearly has the potential to do the same. "I often wonder why it hasn't happened, and I can't put my finger on it," says Martin Bell. "But top skiers tend to be young, and often come from small mountain villages. So they don't tend to be wise in the ways of the world. Also, they come from diverse cultures and speak different languages, which makes it difficult for them to band together."

The normal process of revolution against sporting authorities involves the creation of a rival, more commercially oriented circuit. There were rumours that this might happen in the mid-Eighties; but, says Bell, "the racers were sort of bought off by the FIS, when it introduced personal headband sponsorship. And anyway, the competitive skiing season is too short to support two circuits: the old, and a new, breakaway rival. It lasts only from the end of November to the end of March, so there just aren't enough weekends available. And during peak holiday times, the racers aren't too keen to host events."

If some old sporting traditions live on, however, others fade away. You still won't see big-money sponsors' logos on *Ski Sunday*, but neither will you hear the voice of the commentator David Vine. After 19 years on the programme, he has retired. It won't be the same without him chanting his mantra about the tuck position.

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# In Brno, they now ask your opinion ...

Max Wooldridge revisits the Czechs' second city

**"Y**ou know that Skoda in English means 'a pity'?" my translator friend Romana inquired over a dinner of *smazany syr* (fried cheese in bread-crumbs).

It was news to me, but it made sense of an incident I had seen earlier while I was walking to Liberty Square (Namesti Svobody), Brno's main square. A delivery van had driven into the back of a Skoda, knocking the car's bumper off. The driver got out, shrugged his shoulders and simply placed the fender in his boot, accepting the damage as inevitable. No insurance details were exchanged; both drivers just shook hands and departed.

If Prague is the Czech Republic's favourite child, Brno (pronounced *br-no*, like a reaction to a chilly wind – not Bruno as in boxer Frank) is its silent cousin. The city's 650th anniversary in 1993 went largely unnoticed.

Despite its location in the centre of Europe (half way between Budapest and Prague, and close to both Bratislava and Vienna), little is known about the Czech Republic's second city other than that it is the birthplace of the novelist Milan Kundera and the Bren gun. The Second World War machine gun was first manufactured in Brno, before production moved to Enfield.

When it comes to architecture, Brno beats Prague hands down, with its weird and wonderful "House of the Four Ninies" (U Ctyr Mamlasu), in the triangular Liberty Square, built at the turn of the century by a rich Jewish industrialist. The "Ninies" are four massive stone figures with agonised expressions who support the building on their shoulders.

I found more pained looks on the faces of Capuchin monks, whose remains are displayed in the crypt of Brno's 17th-century monastery, a real theatre of the macabre, nearby in Namesti Kapucinske. They are joined by the bodies of local burghers and noblemen, preserved by an ingenious ventilation system.

One of the monks was hurried alive; when his coffin was opened he was discovered lying in a different position to when he was laid to rest. (And look out for chandeliers made of human bones.)

The first time that I visited Brno was in November 1989, during the demonstrations that led to the Velvet Revolution. I joined thousands of students in Liberty Square; we anxiously stuffed newspapers down our backs in case the police beat us. It was then that I met Petr, a local English teacher. Now, he runs his own English language school and promotes classical music concerts for touring foreign orchestras. When we met again in a hotel lobby he was busy explaining to an American producer why his concert posters had been delayed. "The printers are not capitalistic yet. They need two weeks."

## Getting there

There are no direct flights between the UK and Brno. The closest international gateway is Prague, which has daily services from Heathrow on British Airways (0345 222111), British Midland (0345 554554), or CSA Czech Airlines (0171-255 1898) – which also operates from Stansted. In descending order, the lowest return fares for each airline (including tax) are as follows, applicable for passengers travelling in January:

British Airways' lowest World Offer fare of £199.90 must be booked by 18 December.

British Midland charges £180.90 for a ticket, which must be booked at least a day before travelling.

CSA charges the same amount for travellers departing from Heathrow, but flights from Stansted come out £15 cheaper, at £165.90.

A bus from Victoria coach station in London to Florenc bus station in Prague costs £95 return (including free soft drinks) and takes about 20 hours, through Kingscourt Express (0181-673 7500).

From Prague, a connecting bus or train to Brno takes around three hours and costs about £10 each way.

## Staying there

Rates quoted for the following hotels are for a night in a double room, including breakfast. Hotel Avion, Ceska 20 (00 42 5 42 21 50 16): £37 or £28 – the lower price is for rooms with a shower but no toilet. Hotel Pegas, Jakubská 4 (00 42 5 42 21 01 04): £40. Hotel Slovan, Lidická 23 (00 42 5 41 32 12 07): £36.

## Further information

Contact the Czech Centre, 95 Great Portland Street, London W1N 5RA (0171-291 9924). Open 9.30am-5pm from Monday to Friday. Nearest tube station: Oxford Circus.

The tourist office in Brno is located at Behoušská 3, but its telephone number (00 42 5 42 21 10 89, extension 90) never seems to get an answer.

Later, we dined at the U Pinkasu beer hall off Ceska, Brno's main shopping street. There were no tables free so we sat amongst cheerful Czechs, sipping glasses of golden beer and feasting on fattening food such as *svickova* (beef in cream sauce) and *knedliky* (dumplings). On the next table, two middle-aged women with clashing hair tints refused to let two men share their table with them. I asked Petr what was going on. "They didn't like the way the men asked

if they could sit down," he explained.

Was Brno, I wondered, a city of unpleasantly brusque people? I was reassured to some extent when I learnt that the twisted spire above the Gothic portal of the 13th-century Old Town Hall (Staré Radnice) was not the result of vandalism by Lada louts. More like revenge wreaked by the 16th-century sculptor Anton Pilgram: when the council didn't pay him as much as he'd hoped, he instructed his stone-cutters to bend the tallest spire. It remains twisted to this day, aptly located above the statue of justice.

Churches, it seems, are a focal point for local – and lasting – expression. At the top of St James Church in Jakubské Namesti is "Nehanba" (the shameless one), a manikin who exposes his bottom from the church tower's southern window. The manikin is believed to have been built as an eloquent message to a rival church south of the city.

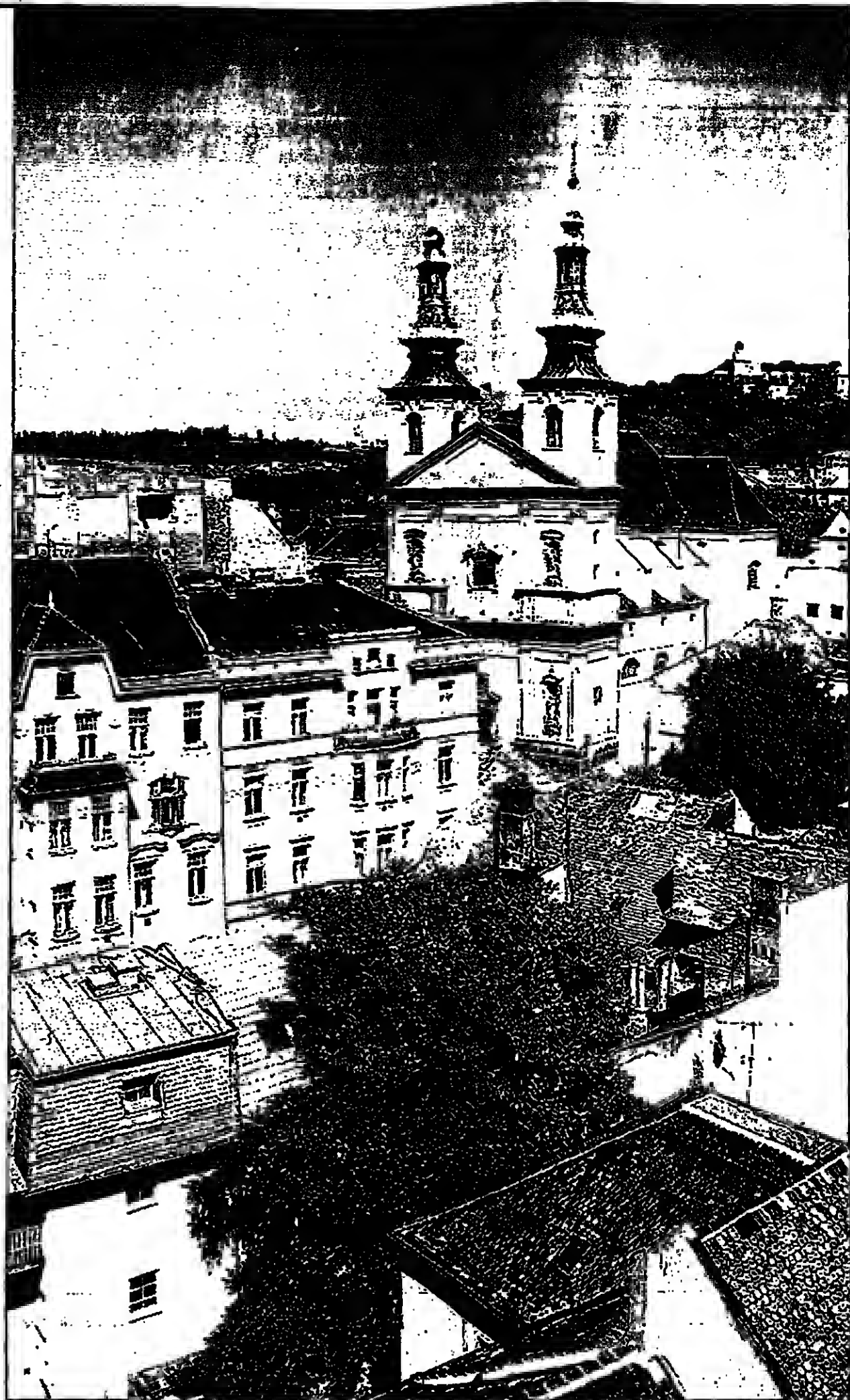
Perhaps its desired target was the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul on Petrov Hill, with imposing twin spires reminiscent of the *Thunderbirds* rocket. For the last 350 years, its bells have rung at midday an hour early. In 1645, a crafty bishop rang the cathedral bells for noon at 11am, after a Swedish General besieging the city declared that he would leave if his troops hadn't captured the place by midday.

Other imagery abounds. Brno's best known attraction is the Brno Dragon, which hangs in the entrance of the town hall. But the legendary dragon, reputedly killed by a gallant knight after it had terrorised the city, is more likely to be a stuffed Amazonian alligator brought home by a oobleman. Also of the stuff of legend is the Brno Wheel, said to have been made in 1636 by a cocksure carpenter 40km away in Lednice, southern Moravia. He chopped a tree down, made a wheel and rolled it to Brno all in one day. What a guy – but quite what he was trying to prove, no one knows.

The place seemed full of impressive people. Over a lunch of *bramborak labutník* (potato pancakes) in another beer hall, I sat next to two elderly Czech ladies. Blame my circumspect English upbringing, but I rather expected them to drink something like a *slivovice* (plum brandy) each. They were having none of it, preferring pints of dark beer.

Later, I watched two brewery workers spend half an hour delivering more than a hundred beer barrels. Perhaps the brewery had deregulated their quality control department: certainly the workers spent the next hour drinking large quantities before leaving. Little wonder, then, that one of the first entries in my Czech phrasebook was a translation for "be absolutely smashed".

Another beerhall – the Two Rams (U Dvou Kozlu), located on the site of the former Communist party's regional headquarters, was so smoky that I almost



When it comes to architecture, Brno beats Prague hands down

PHOTOGRAPH ASPECT

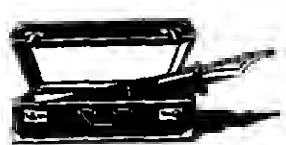
needed a thermal imager to see anything. This is hardly surprising, when you realise that the Czechs have a popular, chain-smoking president and a brand of cigarettes called Start.

Seven years ago young Czechs, with or without cigarettes in hand, had approached me in the streets and offered to change money. Now they simply

wanted my opinion. Pavel, a student I met while I was waiting for a bus to Bratislava, was bursting with questions. Was it all right to be disillusioned with democracy so soon, he wanted to know. What did I think of the split with Slovakia? Did the Czech Republic lack confidence as a nation?

Communism here may be pretty much

dead, but another of Brno's past landlords survives – at least in a gastronomic incarnation. Bloated like a Habsburg lip, *parek* (bot sausages) sell from roadside stalls all over the city. The last time I stopped to buy one, it was served on a piece of cardboard with a dollop of mustard. Market forces mean that they now arrive on polystyrene plates.



## something to declare

### Trouble spots



The following places are at risk from bombings.

**India:** The Travel Advice Unit of the Foreign Office (0171-238 4503) advises against all travel to Jammu and Kashmir. There have been recent bomb explosions in public places in Delhi (above) and on public transport in neighbouring areas. Reuter reports that 12 train passengers were killed and 37 injured when a bomb exploded on a train in Ambala. Police think it may be part of an escalation of violence before state assembly elections in Punjab, due by next February.

**Corsica:** a bomb damaged a building owned by the regional authority for northern Corsica last week but caused no injuries. The device exploded outside the northern capital

**Bastia,** blowing out the windows of the building. It is the latest in a series of bombings, which have occurred mostly at night, by separatists seeking more autonomy from France for Corsica. Casualties are rare.

**Ethiopia:** A bomb in the Wabe Shabelle Hotel, Addis Ababa, in August killed one person and injured 11, including a European visitor. There have been explosions in other Ethiopian hotels. The Foreign Office advises "vigilance at all times".

**Central African Republic:** Rebel soldiers in the capital, Bangui, have fired mortar bombs near the French embassy at the Sofitel hotel, where some loyalist government forces are based – Reuter.

Philippa Czernin

### A likely story

"The cake will be delivered within 14 days" – Royal Mail promotion.

We like to keep our contributors sweet, especially those of the calibre of Harriet O'Brien (whose story on Cornwall appears on page nine). We also need to watch the budget. So the Royal Mail Send-a-Cake promotion, back in October, presented an ideal solution.

All you had to do was to collect a few first-class stamps and send a voucher to an address in Cambridge. You could have a personalised message added. With Ms O'Brien's birthday impending on 25 October, the timing was ideal. "Happy birthday and many happy returns," we wrote, and with the self-satisfaction of the president, looked forward to another satisfied contributor.

The cake arrived on Monday of this week, over six weeks late. If the Royal Mail had shown the nous to change the message to "Merry Christmas" we could have forgiven the organisation. Except for one thing. Look at the width of this column, then imagine a square cake of that dimension. That is the exact size of the bite-sized confection. Ms O'Brien was amused, but not nourished.

### Bargain of the week

After Christmas and New Year, there is always a slump in demand for leisure air travel. In anticipation, Air UK (0345 666777) has brought out a range of cheap fares, both one-way and return, for travel from 6 January to 15 March. The best deals are between London and

Aberdeen or Inverness (£40 one way, £75 return, including tax) and from Stansted to Florence and back (£54 single, £108.60 return). You must book 14 days in advance, but note that the usual "Saturday night stay" rule does not apply – making these handy for business travellers, too.

### Visitors' book

Posada Mirador, Chihuahua-Pacifico Railway, Mexico.

Awesome [sic]. Thrilling. Thanks so much. Keith Thomson and Martha Krupp, Tucson, Arizona.

Wonderful. Wonderful. Wonderful place. Mary and Earl Morris, Portland, Oregon.

Vista Magnifico. Nydia and John Gletne, Tahoe City, Ca.

Too romantic for someone so alone. Alona Guerra, San Antonio, Texas.

Es simplemente un lugar maravilloso. Betty Aguilar, Arocha, Nueva Rosita, Coahuila.

### Next Saturday in The Long Weekend

Winter tales: the poet Brian Patten paints a picture of midwinter Kraków in a thousand words.

Plus: sing-your-way-around-the-world – how many naff travel-related Christmas tunes can you identify?



"E. suddenly appeared, wearing an ugly smile. He suggested they settle this matter by playing Russian roulette..." In what she expects to be her last major piece of published writing, *Martha Gellhorn* probes the mysteries of memory, and recaptures astonishing moments from her astonishing life

Plus: David Sylvester on the origins of Cubism; Andy Beckett on a thoroughly modern drifter; and the very best of the year's arts

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



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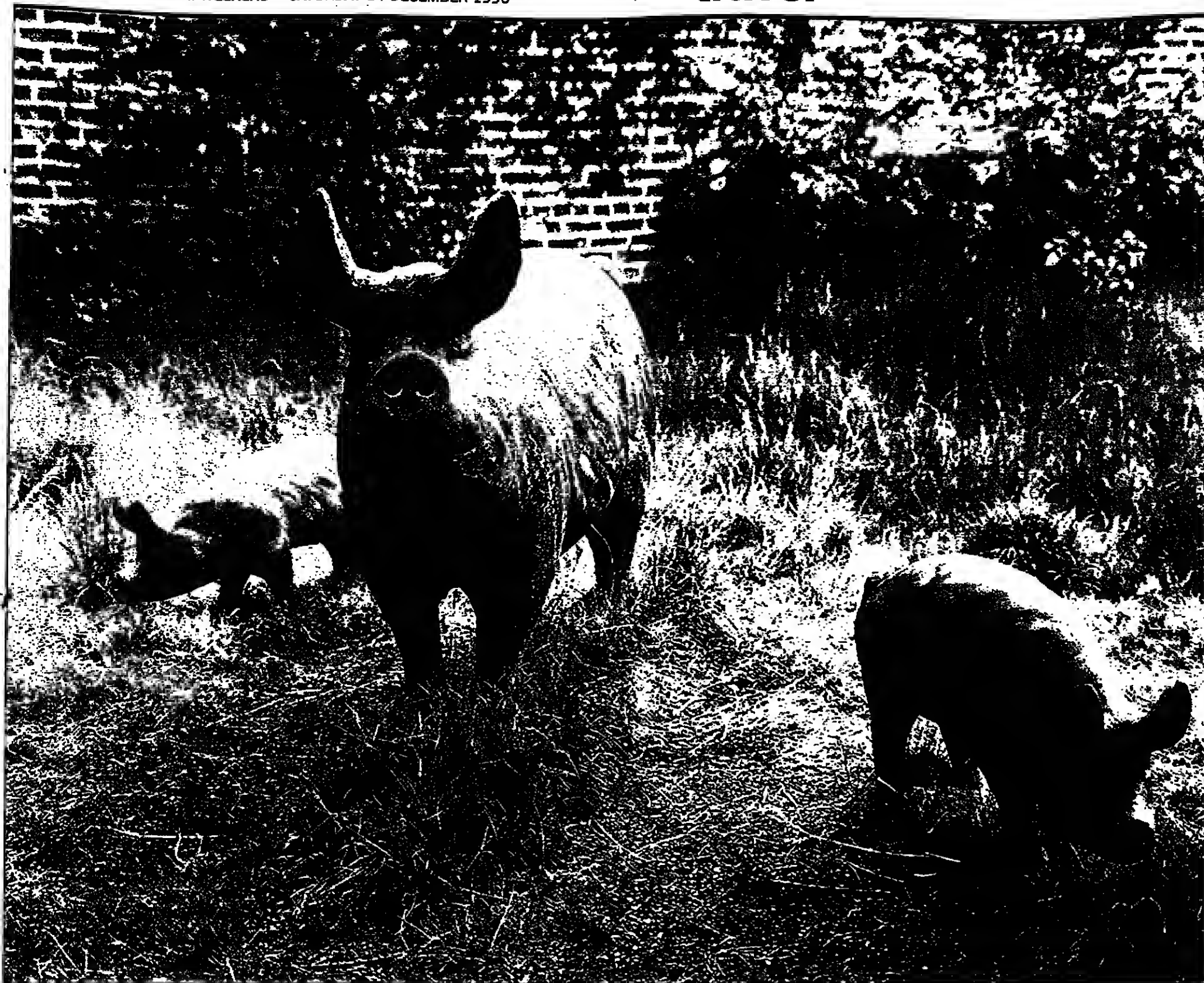
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Norton Priory: very much a living museum

Photograph: The Norton Priory Museum Trust

## 'It would be scary at night'

Caroline Millar and her family saw how the monks lived at Norton Priory

The sign for Norton Priory looks incongruous, surrounded by the shaven lawns and hi-tech structures of a Business Park. Your heart starts to sink. It doesn't recover much as you approach a low, modern building in tastefully landscaped surroundings.

Then you step into another world. You see a medieval stonemason bewing stones for a long-gone priory. There's a black canon crouched over his missal. You hear monks chanting. Yes, this is a museum. But it's one that brings you very close to the people who lived and died on the land around you – the monks who were here for four hundred years, until the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The Brooke family, who demolished the priory and built two fine houses, have now also gone.

Your footsteps echo as you walk through the Undercroft – part of the old priory that was used as a cellar. And then outside to the ruins – the Cloister Walk, the chapter house and the graves in the church.

You hear the bell tolling as you walk past the kitchens, to the herb garden and woodland beyond. There is an elegant Georgian summer house and, hidden in

the woods, a Victorian cottage where the ladies and gentlemen used to take tea.

Crossing the bridge over the dual carriageway to the other part of the estate, the 20th century intrudes. But then you enter a swathe of ancient woodland, oaks, elder, and horse-chestnut. The walled garden is closed for the winter, so the day ends in the old pear orchard, with the trees outlined against a darkening sky.

### The visitors

Caroline Millar, a freelance writer, went to Norton Priory Museum with her husband, Malcolm, a university lecturer, their son, Thomas, aged seven, and daughter, Claire, aged three.

Caroline: The museum presents the life of the priory very clearly, and Thomas was fascinated. He especially loved the models of the priory as it was being built, and he was still young enough to ask the question, "What happened when they went to the loo?" We satisfied our curiosity later by tracing the path of the drain from the monks' latrine.

On a misty afternoon, it's easy to

imagine that the black canons still pace the cloisters. Not easily spooked, Claire climbed over the ruins. We had to watch carefully, as there are a couple of steep drops.

We saw rabbits, squirrels and birds in the woods. Prepare for a cold winter – the bolly was absolutely splattered with red berries. In the clearings you come across work by living artists, a statue or maybe an abstract sculpture. Some of them reminded me of rusty old cars, but then I'm totally unartistic. I did like Coventina, the Celtic goddess of streams and wells, who crouched at the head of the brook.

Thomas: I didn't like walking all day because it made my legs hurt. I liked the model of the church being built. There's scaffolding and ladders and the little people can climb up. There's stonemasons, and even a little bit of cement. I liked learning about the monks in the church and how they lived, and where they put their food.

The Undercroft would be a bit scary at night – you might think ghosts would come out of the bits in the wall. If they

did make a noise it would echo. There's a very old chair in the Undercroft, and very old wood in the fireplace. In one of the graves there is a daddy, and then there were three babies. I think that's very sad.

The bell was good. At first I was scared of the noise but I just swung it very hard and it went whack!

Claire: The skeleton looks a bit scary to me. It's happy because I can see its mouth laughing. He's got no clothes on. He was once a people and then the people died.

I liked the bricks to play with because I like to climb on them. The summer-house looks nice. I can play with the leaves in it, sweeping the leaves up with a brush. Mum and Daddy say "come on", and I stay because I like to.

Malcolm: A still winter day was a good time to come – it's quiet and very atmospheric here. You see the way life has ebbed and flowed in this place.

I think the sculptures are to show the continuity between the land and man-made objects. The priory stones came

from the land, and later went back to the land. It's an interlinking of nature and man, death and rebirth.

**The deal**  
Norton Priory, Manor Park, Runcorn, Cheshire (01928 569895)

Location: From M56 take Junction 11 for Warrington and follow signs for Norton Priory. From other directions follow "all other Runcorn traffic" and then "Norton Priory" signs. By public transport, go by train to Runcorn then take bus 14 to where the Busway crosses the Bridgewater Expressway. It is then a half-mile walk. Winter opening: 12 noon to 4pm daily. Walled Garden closed.

Entrance: adults, £2.60; concessions, £1.40; under-fives, free; family day-ticket for two adults and three children, £6.95. Access: Good for wheelchairs and buggies. Food and drink: Café in the museum – a few home-made cakes, but mainly wrapped biscuits, sweets and crisps. Coffee, tea and soup available.

Toilets: In the museum. Disabled toilet and baby-change room. Clean and warm. Education: Extensive educational activities. Contact the museum for details.

## Are we nearly there?

A weekly round-up of events for children

Christmas themed events are coming thick and fast. It may seem like overkill, but many venues are pulling out the stops to put on some really special activities. (Then again, by the end of all this you may never be able to look a mince pie in the eye again.)

### Christmas at the Zoo

London Zoo, Regent's Park Road, London (0171-449 6235) every weekend to 22 December. Special opening on Monday 23 December. Pre-book a half-hour slot between 10.30 and 3.30pm. Price includes access to the rest of the zoo. Adults, £11; children, £9.

At the children's zoo kids can meet Melchior the wise man (and the resident camels), introduce themselves to Santa's reserve reindeer, follow the shepherd with his sheep, or visit Isaac the luncheon with his stable of donkeys and ponies. Santa will be in his grotto doling out gifts and there will be mince pies, mulled wine and special hot drinks for children.

### Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

Woolton Hall Natural History Museum, Woolton Park, Nottingham NG8 2AE (0115 928 1333). 19-21 December, 10am-11.30 am and 1pm-2.30pm. Entrance in museum: adults, £1.50 for adults; children, 75p; under-fives, free.

This annual celebration of Christmas is specifically for the under-fives. Activities include singing, storytelling and tree decorating. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

### Christmas family fun day

Memorial Hall, Northwich, Vale Royal, Cheshire. 11am-3pm today (01606 41430). Free. Father Christmas will be stopping off on his busy schedule to hand out chocolate coins and buttons at this festive open day thrown by the local council. Children's craft activities: making cards and crackers, decorating T-shirts and prettifying logs to decorate the Christmas table. School orchestras will play all day and the mayor will make a grand draw for charity. The council's cherry-picker will be on hand to give children a bird's-eye view of Northwich.

### Winter Wonderland

Marwell Zoological Park, Winchester, Hampshire (01963-777407). Last spaces for Winter Wonderland available 19, 20 December. Wild Lights 16, 17 Dec. Adults, £7.50; children, £7.50; under-tens, £5.50. Pre-booking essential.

Take children to a sparkling walk-through display of traditional and fantasy tableaux at Marwell Zoo, before perusing gift stalls, receiving a gift from Santa and greeting a few of his reindeer. Alternatively, take them along for an exciting evening visit to Wild Lights, to see illuminations in the park.

### A Tudor Christmas

Sulgrave Manor, Sulgrave, near Banbury, Oxfordshire (01295-760205) today and tomorrow 10.30am-1pm and 2-4.30pm. Adults, £4; children, £2.

Visitors to Sulgrave Manor (home of George Washington's ancestors) will be met by the lord of the manor and his household in Tudor costume. The Great Hall will be decked with seasonal greenery and log fires will be burning. After a guided tour of the manor guests can scoff wassail and winter sweetmeats and learn about the customs and traditions of Christmas.

### Christmas capers

Clive House Museum, Shrewsbury, Shropshire (01743-354 811) today, 10am-3.30pm, £2.

Get punch-drunk at Clive House Museum where families will be greeted by costumed attendants, and served coffee, mince pies and punch. Children can make their own cards and decorations, and the older ones may like to try their hand at decorating the Christmas cake.

Liese Spencer

## One parent, will travel... possibly

Deborah Jackson assesses the value of single-parent offers from the travel industry

"Guaranteed free child holidays!" declare the holiday brochures. But very little is guaranteed if you fail to travel in the traditional family group of two parents and a modest number of children.

Single parents are the ones who probably most need the rest – and the discount, but their needs are usually ignored. Travel operators make few concessions and may even insist that the oldest child pays the full adult rate. So we made some calls on behalf of a single mother with two children, aged six and eight, seeking a high-season holiday abroad or in the UK.

### Package holidays abroad

The lone parent does not stand a chance. As the Thomson brochure states, "A free child place is only available for a child sharing a room with two full-fare paying adults", and all the other operators we checked make the same disclaimer. Also, watch out for under-occupancy charges if your room or apartment is meant to take four.

Most of the one-parent family offers we investigated turned out to be of little value. Either they did not apply to a single

parent with two children, or the savings were feeble. Over and over, we were told we'd be better off paying for the oldest child as an adult and taking whatever concessions we could for the youngest.

**Airtours (01706 260000):** Single parents have to pay two adult fares whatever concessions they receive, said the operator. **Sunworld (0113 255 5222):** The single-parent family saver advertised in the brochure looked promising: "We offer holidays where a special reduction applies to a child sharing a room with only one adult."

But, the operator explained, this offer was redundant for a mother of two. "This only applies to one adult, one child. If you have two children, one pays the adult price."

**Thomson (0990 673310):** Thomson does not offer any concessions to single parents: "One of your children would have to go as an adult," I was told. I was referred to the Skytours brochure for single-parent offers.

**Skytours (0121 232 3824):** Even though this company is really just a brand name for the Thomson group, it has a much more solo-friendly attitude. At last, special deals for single parents at 16

selected hotels and apartments in 13 different resorts including Majorca, Tenerife, Turkey, and Halkidiki, Greece. Both first and second child prices apply to children travelling with just one adult. Unfortunately, neither child counts towards under-occupancy charges on this offer, so supplements could be steep.

**First Choice (One Parent Family Hotline 0161 745 4600):** The hotline is new for this year. However, offers apply to a small handful of hotels and apartments, "mostly in Majorca", and places were almost all allocated at the time of calling. "Sometimes it's cheaper to pay two adult fares and take advantage of the free child offer," said the operator. A one-parent family staying at, for instance, the Rosa del Mar apartments in Palma Nova would also be liable for under-occupancy charges of £12 a night in high season, whichever deal they travelled on.

**Cosmos (0161 480 5799):** A healthy range of single-parent deals in hotels and all-inclusive resorts from Majorca to Malta and the Gambia. Look out for offers under the "Extra Value" section. Two children (or teenagers) qualify for discounts when travelling with one parent

rather than two. But if one adult is sharing a room with three children, the third child pays the adult price.

**Virgin Holidays (01293 617181):** Excellent news in the Florida/Caribbean brochure for lone parents with up to three children. "Single Parent Virgins" are invited to enjoy discounts on selected hotels in Orlando, Miami and St Petersburg.

### Camping abroad

These holidays are tailor-made for families of unusual shapes and sizes. Under-18s travel free, and one parent can usually travel with four children without paying punitive supplements or extra adult fees.

**Eurocamp (01565 626262):** One-adult parties are offered £65 off the base holiday price. Operators are extremely helpful in working out the cheapest holiday prices and best deals on crossings.

**Keycamp (0181 395 4400):** There's a £50 discount for one-parent families on single-centre holidays departing between 26 June and 20 August (£30 discount on other dates). To qualify, book by 31 January.

**French Country Camping (01565 626266):** £65 off the basic holiday price.

**Canvas (01383 644000):** A reduction of between £30 and £85 for single-parent groups, depending on season.

**Haven Europe (01705 466111):** Haven's "Single Saver" offers parties headed by one adult a reduction of £8 a night between 19 July and 1 August, and £4 a night on other dates. This applies to holidays from five to 14 nights long.

### Award-winning UK hotels

A very mixed bunch of prices and attitudes from establishments who have won awards for catering for families.

**The Knoll House, Studland, Dorset (01929 450450):** A devilishly difficult system of adding up the children's ages and turning them into a percentage left us with a 100 per cent bill for the eight-year-old and a 60 per cent reduction for the six-year-old. "So the oldest child pays an adult fee?" I asked. "Well, yes, but it's not as simple as that," I wish it were.

**The Saunton Sands Hotel, Braunton, Devon (01271 890212):** One parent sharing with children in a triple-bedded room will not be penalised. "One child should pay an adult fee, but we would normally

waive that." Children each receive their normal reduction from the adult tariff (40 per cent for a six- and an eight-year-old). **Criff Hydre, Perthshire (01764 655555):** There are no double occupancy supplements for single parents, who qualify for the usual child discounts, according to age.

**Trevelgue Hotel, Porth, Cornwall (01637 872864):** "We aim to give a great deal," said owner Nicholas Malcolm. "No single supplements, all discounts – even the youngest child free, when applicable."

One-parent treats include complimentary childcare tickets: free use of gym, squash and tennis facilities, introductions to other guests for sports and entertainment; childcare at dinner time and priority booking on children's clubs. Top marks.

**The National Council for One Parent Families (0171-267 1361)** produces a free information brochure. There's also a 'Guide to Holidays for One Parent Families' from the Holiday Care Service (01293 774535).

**One Parent Family Holidays (01776 889500):** One Parent Family Holidays is a specialist tour operator offering hotel and camping holidays, mainly abroad. **Holiday Endeavour for Lone Parents (01302 725791)** arranges discounted holidays and day trips.







# all consuming

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## How fir can you go?

Christmas trees are seriously fashionable, says Jane Farnival

**F**irs are in fashion. We're in the grip of the greatest nostalgia for Christmas trees since Christmas was invented. Bejewelled branches are everywhere. Liberty's of London has sold out of tassels at £2 each. People will pay florists £80 for a day's lesson in dressing a tree.

We like to think of our trees as being intrinsic to the spirit of Christmas. In fact, no other age bothered so much about them. Homes and interiors magazines for the last century have few. Tree decorations instantly sum up the spirit of the age. To see a society's priorities, look at the top first. The patriotic Victorians had a Union Jack. Now the Empire has gone, we turn to angels and fairies.

The Americans always stuck to gold, in the form of gilded fruit. In 1897 a former railway worker, James Clements, decked his tree with \$70,000-worth of gold ouggets he had found in the Klondike gold rush.

The first recorded Christmas tree just had paper roses. Scholars hah about pagan nature-revival rites, but in fact it started at an office party in Latvia, around 1510. The lads of the merchants' guild cut down an evergreen, decked it with roses, danced round it in the marketplace, then set fire to it.

After that, fun firs (though not fun fires) caught on, prompting a serious crackdown in 16th-century Alsace: "No one shall have more than one Christmas tree or more than eight shoe lengths." In good EC tradition, this was ignored.

Tree decor was religious. The rose for the Virgin Mary. Coloured wafers for holy communion with Christ. In time, these became gilded fruit, to be eaten on Twelfth Night.

The German-cum-British royal family introduced trees here. In 1848 the *Illustrated London News* carried a sketch of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in front of a tree decorated, as he recalled it from his childhood, with candles and baskets of sweets.

Religious roses and wafers were out of the window for the acquisitive, Protestant Victorians. Their desired effect was Tutankhamun's Tomb meets the *Generation Game*. All human life was hung on that tree, from beads to the kitchen sink.

Dickens is the usual suspect for creating Christmas, but his only mention of trees, in a magazine article of 1850, describes someone else's, not his own. It had "dolls, real watches, tables, chairs, bedsteads, wardrobes, eight-day clocks wonderfully made in tin... fiddles and drums, guns, swords..."

Christmas tree candle accidents were few, but tragic enough to make a few concerned eccentrics consider inventing electric fairy lights. Mazda got there first with elaborate strings of coloured Santa faces, more elaborate, contrived and exciting than today's.

In 1900, the Vanderbilts showed off theirs on a 30ft tree, which cost \$200 a day in electricity. Not a success. By 1905 they had returned to the latest "drip proof" candles.

With the 1914 war, we naturally turned our back on German decorations. Their thin, solemn Santa was replaced by a fat smiling American version on paper. The thrifty saved last year's tree, bare of needles, and re-erected it next year, cloaked in white cotton quilted wadding to represent snow.

After the war, silhouettes were slimmer. In the Thirties, the convenience Christmas arrived in the form of a tinsel tree with fold-down branches and built-in glass icicle decorations.

But the movies reintroduced glamorous, schmaltzy and highly commercial Christmases. Tinsel trees matched the glitzy diamonds worn by the stars.

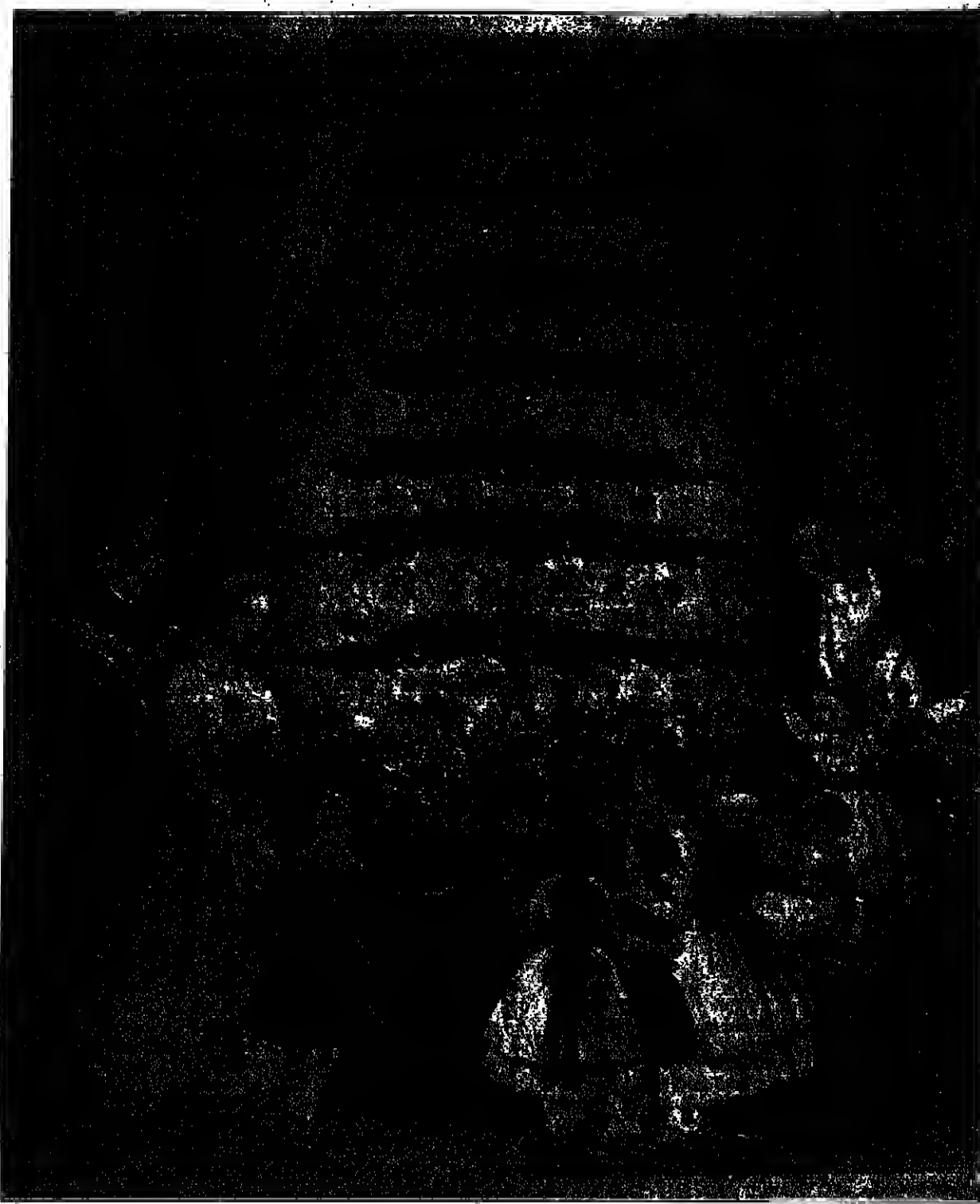
In 1938, Christmas was licensed to Disney. Children were desperate to see the oew film, *Snow White*, then take home the tree baubles to match. And these were baubles shaped like the airships, labelled Graff Zeppelin.

The Second World War brought austerity. The Geffrye Museum in London has a tiny tinsel tree to be folded up and carried to the air raid shelter during the Blitz. You couldn't get silver or gold paint, so glass balls were clear, or painted with stripes.

But by the Fifties, brash, acid colours were in. "Space has become a spiritual necessity: remove non-essentials from your room," intoned *House and Garden* magazine in 1950. Glass balls were quasi-scientific, with conical indentations, like hollow tumblers. Smaller beads were wired together like molecular models. Nylon threads covered polystyrene scientific balls.

The writer S.J. Perelman was driven insane by trying out the suggestions of a Mr Lester Gaba in *Mademoiselle* magazine: "Dip tips of twisted cotton strips into India ink and trim your tree entirely with 'ermine tails'. Pin a fresh mauve orchid to the top."

The dissenting voice of Cool was always around. The higher your class, the less your tree. In 1875, the Aesthetes might hang a few unlit, tiny paper lanterns on some bare twigs in a dark corner of the room. In 1960, *House and Garden* shows decorator Nancy Lancaster's Bond Street flat at Christmas. You can just see a shred of tinsel cowering in a pot plant.



Tree decorations instantly sum up the spirit of the age

PHOTOGRAPH: HULTON GETTY

The Sixties proved to be a DIY-fest. When we had finished papering over original features, there were modern trees to make, to match your home-licked paperchains. Try the bachelor tree, made by impaling hundreds of cigarettes on wires stuck in florist's foam in a vase. Or use marshmallows. "Colour-stressed tibits" are the things to stick on the tree, as *Ideal Homes* put it. We struggled with eggshells on barley stalks, stars made of drinking straws, and holly painted white and stuck into lumps of Plasticine.

By 1970, the Pill was in, and children and Christmas trees weren't. You might stick a star on top of your giant cactus, paint honesty leaves red, poke some twigs into a milk bottle or drape some tinsel over bendy floor lights drooping over the table.

Suddenly came the Eighties, designer doo-dahs, and trees power-dressed to match the pussycat-bowed blouses of successful women everywhere. "Single colour themes," advised *Homes and Gardens*, "are more elegant". White incandescent trees gave way to natural-looking artificial ones with gold baubles tied with swathes of ribbon and bows.

Fairy lights caught disco fever, and started repeating on us like the onion soup that we ate in chic little bistros.

Banks did up their reception areas in tartan to emphasise the Scottish values of thrift and reliability, and trees matched. People paid hundreds of pounds for a pair of round-clipped box trees to put beside the coal-effect gas fire.

Then the recession struck. A late-Eighties best-seller was an ironic cardboard cut-out tree, complete with printed-on decorations. Meanwhile the "haves" bought expensive designer-decorated trees that looked quite ordinary until you noticed Vivienne Westwood on the label.

What of the Nineties? Minimalists buy bare-branched trees like witches' broomsticks. Ecologists stick outdoor lights and balls of bird food on the growing tree in the front garden.

But when we're honest, most of us prefer a family tree, a marker of real tradition, with faded tinsel, the candles your granny kept in their old clips and children's hand-made decorations. The white-painted bolly in Plasticine has bypassed naff and become nostalgia.

The Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, London E2 8EA, has a small exhibition of Christmas trees through the ages (recorded information, 0171-739 8543).



bazaar

### good thing

Micromap starter pack, £19.99; additional city centres £9.99.

The Micromap is a cunning pocket-sized viewer through which tiny maps are magnified, and it could mean the end of bulky road atlases and unwieldy maps. The starter pack includes a set of laminated maps, no larger than credit cards, and the tiny hand held viewer into which they're slotted. Additional packs of maps include twenty UK regional cities, a comprehensive guide to London, ten European city centres and ten cities in America.

For mail order call 0800-421 252. Micromap is also available from Harrods, Selfridges, Leading Edge, The General Trading Co, and the YHA Shop.

### mad thing



Fashion pundits can recreate fresh and zany catwalk looks using "Twirlees". Add an electric-blue stripe à la Chanel in an instant. Club queens and disco divas can also add Twirlees to synchronise their latest look. Available in siren red, pike green, electric blue, petal pink, canary yellow and this season's favourite: passionate purple.

£6.95 each from Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1, and Superdrug branches nationwide.

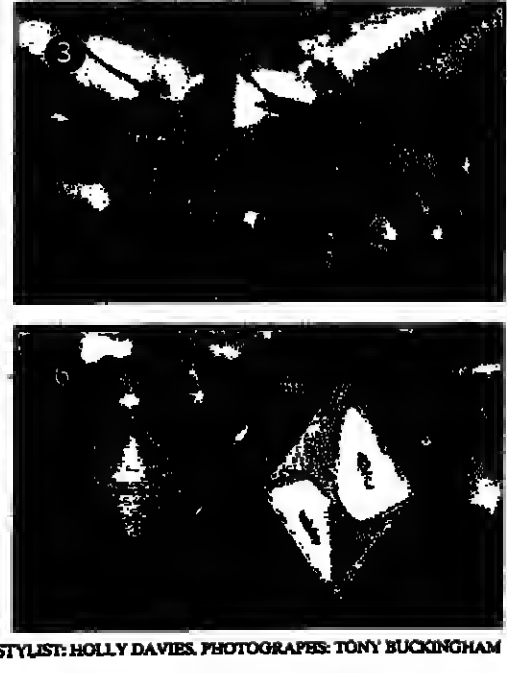
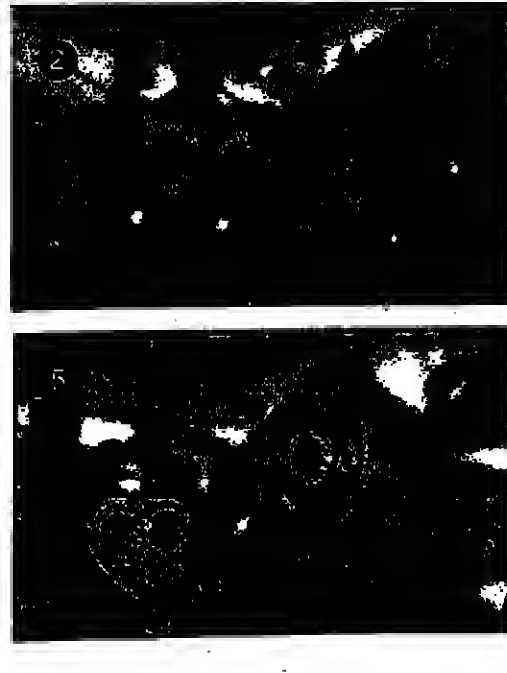
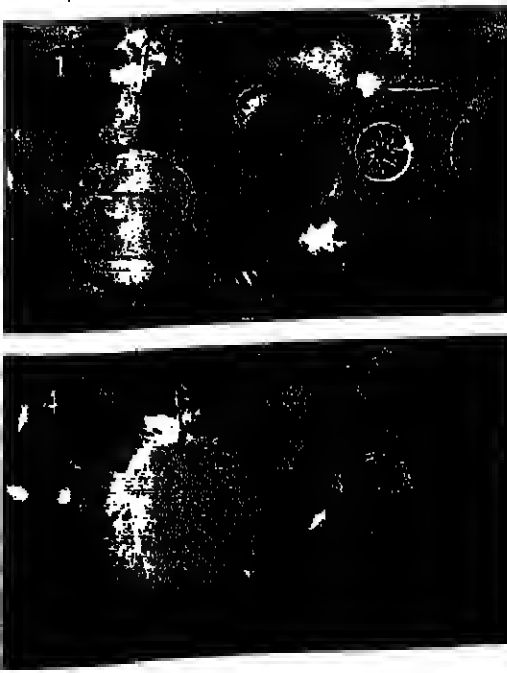
### sure thing

Cocktail shaker, £15 and Martini glasses, £8 for a set of four.

No party is complete without cocktails, and Martinis are just the thing: easy to make and easier still to drink. Get yourself down to M&S and grab one of these sleek chrome shakers and a set of Martini glasses. But remember, this is the drink that 007 got wrong - Martinis are never shaken, you should use the shaker to rinse your ice with Dry Vermouth, pour off the liquid, drop the ice cubes into the glass and top up with your chosen poison. If you like your Martini gin based try Tanqueray, which comes in a bottle to match this shaker, and if you prefer vodka make sure it's Polish.

Marks and Spencer stores nationwide.

## Six of the best... for a well decorated 1996



It's time to make a trip to the loft or garage, or under the stairs, to drag out last year's Christmas decorations. Having to buy new ones can be annoying, but it's comforting to know that everyone has the same problem. Either you force yourself to admit how fatty they're beginning to look - or you find yourself gazing stubbornly at the same old baubles, year in, year out.

We feature alternatives to the traditional red and green balls - from hand-made Russian diamonds to mirrored disco balls. Travel further afield, think globally, and you won't need much else - maybe some fairy lights, but no tinsel.

1 Pink and red patterned papier mâché ball, £2.75; orange and yellow papier mâché ball, also £2.75; both from Habitat, 196 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 and nationwide (0645 334433).  
2 Orange silk thread ball with mirror work, £3; fuchsia pink ball with tassels, £3, both from Designers Guild, 267-271 Kings Road, London SW5 (0171-2437 3000).  
3 Orange Moroccan lantern, £11; blue lantern, £15; from Garden Cuniatti, 83 Westbourne Park Road, London W2 (0171-229 8559).  
4 Pink feather ball, £2.99; disco ball, £1.99. Paperchase, 213 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 and nationwide (0171-5800 8496).  
5 Red embroidered heart, £3.50; purple embroidered ball, £8.50; from Liberty, 214-220 Regent Street, London W1 (0171-730 1234).  
6 Gold satin thread Russian drop, £3.99; white and gold Russian diamond, £3.99; from Selfridges, 400 Oxford Street, London W1 (0171-629 1234).

STYLIST: HOLLY DAVIES. PHOTOGRAPHS: TONY BUCKINGHAM

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The Hanging Heater is also ideal for using in a greenhouse as well as in a shed, outhouse or garage. It requires just over half a litre (one pint) of paraffin to provide gentle warmth for 80 hours guarding against frost and helping protect pipes that are liable to freeze (not for use in tents). Much cheaper than a plumber, the Hanging Heater only costs £13.95 inc p.p.p.

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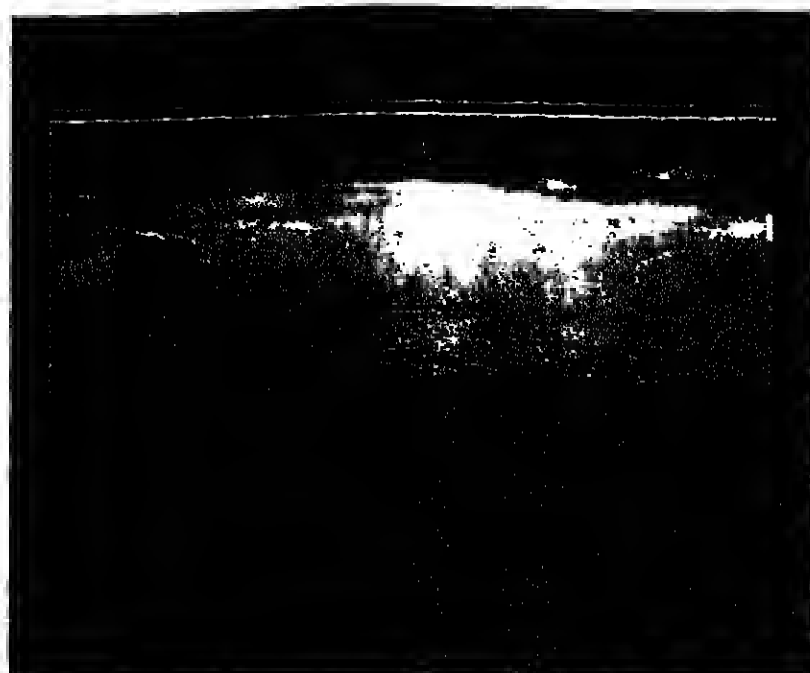
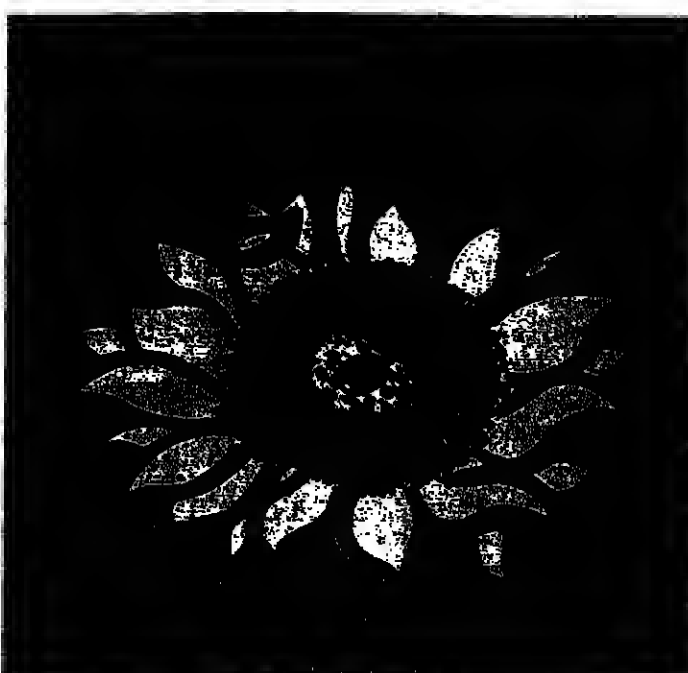
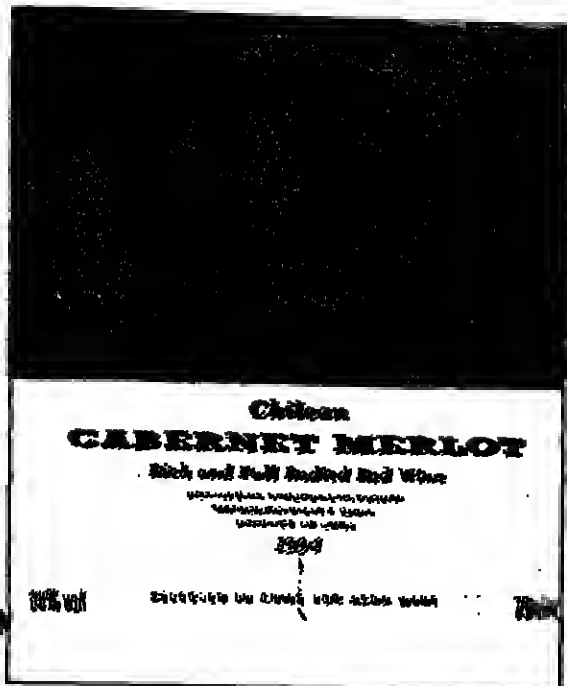






# Never mind the bottles...

As we drink more wine the packaging has become more frivolous, writes Sheila Prophet



What do Trio, Poets Corner and Catalyst have in common? And who are Big Frank, Cardinal Zin and the Fat Bastard?

Believe it or not, these are all brands of wine. Wine marketing is becoming bolder and brasher by the day, with wacky names, riotous labels and sexy bottles. It seems it's all part of Britain's new, light-hearted attitude to the grape.

Ten years ago we didn't understand wine and we stuck to those stolid North European wines that were designed to go with food," says David Howes, Communications Manager of Thresher Wine Shops. "Then the Australians reinvented wine and gave us something fresh, fruity and springy which was great to drink on its own. The packaging changed along with the style of wine. Today we all know much more about wine, it's part of everyday life, and we are demanding a bit of frivolity."

The other big change is the attention given to

labels. The ideal back label contains clear, helpful information about the wine itself and the serving of it, while the front is often a miniature work of art.

Beautiful labels were once confined to very expensive wines, such as Chateau de Mouton Rothschild, whose makers commissioned artists such as Picasso to illustrate them. These days everyday wines under a fiver are doing the same thing.

Nick Dymoke-Marr, Senior Wine Buyer for the supermarket chain Asda says: "Labels are especially important to us because 80 per cent of our buyers are women and there is a saying that the first glass is with the eye. Wine also has a certain romance, which we want to preserve."

The result is that many bottles now bear names and scenes which evoke their exotic origins. Asda have a range of Greek wines called Temple Ruins and Marble Mountain, and of course there are numerous Australian Wines with unpronounceable names and dreamy water colours depicting the outback.

There's no doubt these pictures are pretty, but are they accurate? "Sometimes we do use a bit of artistic licence," confesses David Howes. "When we launched Kings Canyon, a Californian wine, the makers sent over their idea for the label, a pretty picture with apple trees and little animals playing

around. It wasn't what we wanted at all. Instead we sent back a picture of rugged scenery, with great rocks reaching to the sky, and said 'This what we want'. OK, it is actually in Arizona, but it looks dramatic on the shelf."

Drama is also the key when it comes to colour. Eye-catching reds, oranges and yellows remain the favourite choices, although the very latest trend is to break a long held colour taboo in the industry and use the colour blue.

"We have a South African wine called Lost Horizons, which is in a blue bottle. We were always told never to use blue with wine, though no one seems to know where this taboo came from, but people seem to like it, as it is selling extraordinarily well," says Geraldine Jago, Wine Development Manager of The Victoria Wine Company.

In fact the bottles themselves can be an important selling point. Remember those Paul Masson carafes we all collected a few years ago?

"The newest bottle is sexy - long and slim with a flanged lip at the top to stop drips, and a tiny label," says David Howes. "The Californian company Gallo have used this shape for their wine Turning Leaf, and a Chilean winemaker called Ignacio Recabarren has used it for a wine called Trio which he produced for us. He says the name represents the three elements of wine, the soil, the climate and the maker - he is a very vain man!

When he first produced Trio, Ignacio said, 'This bottle has the beauty of Sharon Stone - you can see everything you are getting!'

An increasing number of wines are named after people, some of whom exist and some don't. The Victoria Wine Company, for example have a popular range named Big Frank - there's Big Frank's Red, Big Frank's White, and his latest, a sweet wine called Big Frank's Seriously Sticky. "Yes, Big Frank exists," says Geraldine Jago. "He is Frank Chludinski, a Pole from Boston who married a lady from the South of France whose father had a vineyard, and now he makes wine. We also have Ed's Red, and he exists too. He is flying winemaker Ed Flaherty."

However, Fat Bastard, a Chardonnay sold by the new Firkin chain is not named after an overbearing vineyard owner with a big appetite. Instead the wine was apparently christened when its French maker, Thierry Boudinaud, tasted it and pronounced it "a fat bastard of a Chardonnay".

Trendy chain Oddbins have a few characters of their own, though they admit these exist only in the imaginations of eccentric winemaker Randall Graham and the artist Ralph Steadman, who designs many of their labels. "There is the Catalyst, a cat named in a bar in Santa Cruz, close to Randall's vineyard, and there is Cardinal Zin, a religious chap who has been tempted off the

straight and narrow by the Zinfandel grape," says Oddbins' Karen Wise.

Randall's other wines include the authentically Italian sounding Rosato Del Fiasco, named because the first hatch proved a disaster, and two best-selling bottles simply called Bloody Good White and Bloody Good Red.

Thankfully, wine isn't yet competing with alcopops such as Two Dogs, named after the rude schoolboy joke about the first thing the Indian baby saw outside its wigwam. But jokiness is definitely catching on. The Victoria Wine Company already sells a New Zealand Sauvignon called Cat's Pee On A Gooseberry Bush, which surprisingly sells well, and even sillier names look set to follow.

It may all be just a gimmick, but it seems to be working. Our consumption of wine has quadrupled in the last 25 years, and even wine experts are smiling. "Cat's Pee and Fat Bastard may be straining the boundaries of good taste, but on the whole the use of humour to break down the fear of buying wine and to make it more accessible can only be a good thing," says Gareth Lawrence of the Wine and Spirit Education Trust. "Of course it wouldn't work if the wine itself didn't match up, but that isn't the case. In the last few years there has been a vast improvement in the standards of even the cheapest wines."

## ...but pull out all the stops

Sam Coates tests that most important of seasonal aids - the corkscrew

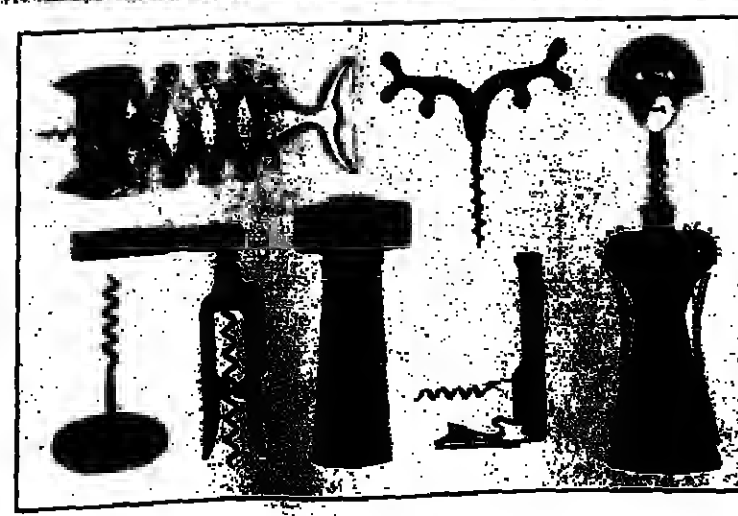
A belt buckle, blunt razor or thumb is all it takes the persistent to open a bottle of wine. However, for those not prepared to display such desperation, the heart-sinking mantra: "Does anyone have a corkscrew?" must be chorused at every party.

In the true spirit of the clergy, it was a devotee of the cloth who, by patenting the corkscrew, brought man closer to drink. The first English patent was issued to a clergyman named Samuel Henshall in 1795. He simply added a disc to the end of the worm (the curly bit that goes into the cork) to compress the cork and improve the screw's pulling power. It was sold at an auction last April, along with a 1905 German model whose handles, between which the screw was attached, formed the legs of a semi-naked lady.

Both items came from the personal collection of an Italian. Gianni Giachin, who lived in London until his death last year and had one of the world's highest corkscrew collections. The public were obviously delighted by them, paying between £100 and £2,000 per lot.

For David Howes, a Threshers' wine taster, the way the bottle is opened affects the taste of the wine. "The corkscrews which require less effort are better," he says, "because they cause the least agitation to the liquid inside. I think the Screwpull is the best, if a little expensive: we sell models for up to £80. On the whole, those devices with a nail-like worm are the worst because they break easily and require a lot more effort."

The Independent had the onerous task of opening innumerable bottles, so we could advise our readers which corkscrew to buy this Christmas.



amiably portable, but also easy to misplace. If you don't want to appear pretentious, the Harrods label can be scratched off without too much difficulty. Less than a fiver, it's probably the cheapest thing in the whole store. (Harrods, Knightsbridge: 0171 730 1234)

**Screwpull, by Le Creuset, £16.80** This corkscrew would have made Dr Rubik proud: those with aching brains this Christmas should steer well clear. However, according to corkscrew connoisseurs, owning this device is the zenith to which the wine-drinking public should aspire. It is based (says the office intellectual) on the Crick and Watson dou-

ble helix principle, and its Teflon coating means that little effort is required: just place the lip of the device against the bottle and start turning. Available from Divertment Mail Order (0171 386 9911).

**Antlers, £17.95** Elegantly sculpted to fit Frank Bruno's knuckles, this one is based on the original tried and tested design. Don't bother to buy it - in fact, if you do have £17.95 to throw away, why not spend it on international phone calls in an attempt to track down a plastic model of Buzz Lightyear from Disney's *Toy Story*?

**Autopull, £9.95** "The ethos of the Nineties is convenient but dull." In keeping with this, the Autopull is about as boring as a corkscrew can get. It is made of dull black or white plastic, is based on the principle of the screwpull, and it works! Its only mentionable feature is its bland appearance: it would clash horribly at the dinner table with the antique candlesticks and Waterford crystal.

**The Lazy Fish, £19.95** There is a wide range of possible uses for the Lazy Fish but a corkscrew is not the first that springs to mind. It could be more gainfully used as a novelty door stopper. It strongly resembles a pair of pliers with the end missing. One look at it, and it'll be quite clear why this will undoubtedly be the most popular corkscrew this Christmas. Its bright, shiny surface lures the most vulnerable of relatives (still with no idea of what to buy for Christmas) - and its elastic design will keep the recipient amused for many minutes. The fishbone concertina structure drastically reduces the effort needed to extract a cork from a bottle - but unfortunately it rather impedes the progress of the screw into the cork in the first place.

**La Poigne Wood Corkscrew, £29.95** *La problème ici, c'est que les instructions sont en français. Alors, according to the back of the packet this is an "objet précieux": that is, you have to pay a lot of money for a chunk of wood which you can screw to the wall to hold the corkscrew.*

*Jerry's Home Store (0171 581 0909); the Conran Shop (0171 589 7402)*

## Adwatch: liqueurs

By Meg Carter

Proof (if it were needed) that Christmas is but ten days away comes in the blitz of commercials now airing for Santa's favourite: sticky liqueurs. Just as aunties and uncles across the land dust off the remains of last year's bottle, so the drinks companies are lining up their battalions for this year's festive onslaught.

Archers, Baileys, DiSaronno amaretto, Sheridan's, Tia Maria and more - not to mention a selection of sherries and ports from Croft's to Cockburn - are once more gracing our TV screens, each with a promise of elegance and sophistication.

Take Sheridan's, currently sporting a stylish black-and-white ad highlighting conflicting emotions - love and hate, trust and betrayal. You can't appreciate one without the other, the end-line explains: just as the brand's dark coffee liqueur must be mixed with the accompanying white liqueur cream.

Likewise, Tia Maria. Having dropped Eighties super model Iman, advertising agency Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe's new campaign features an enigmatic Princess of Darkness. The sequence of artfully shot ads, which blend style and sophistication with film noir, were shot by *Highlander 2* director Andy Morahan.

Yet behind the customary gloss a number of manufacturers are attempting to effect a subtle change of tack. For many years, Christmas has marked the focus of their year's marketing activities. Now, they are attempting to position their products as an all-year-round tipple.

So, Tia Maria exploits the vogue for quaffing coffee liqueur mixed with Coke. And Baileys, which for the first time uses humour, features a couple in evening dress apparently getting up to something naughty in an ancient, rickety lift (in fact, they are simply enjoying an innocent glass of Baileys).

The idea is to encourage consumers to consider

drinking Baileys whenever they go out - not just when they're staying at home. explains Hugh Burkitt, chairman of Baileys' agency Court Burkitt and Company. A previous campaign featured a man bringing in sacks of ice to add to the drink - another attempt to re-position it as more than an after-dinner liqueur.

"We know people love the taste of all these liqueurs, but unfortunately they tend to categorise - in this case, liqueurs are still seen by many as after dinner drinks or as drinks for Christmas," adds Tim O'Donnell, marketing controller at International Distillers (IDV) and Vintners whose brands include Baileys, Sheridan's, DiSaronno and Drambuie.

However, IDV has worked to re-position its liqueurs by encouraging consumers to try them in pubs, bars and restaurants, throughout the year and in bigger measures - as a long drink. Baileys, which remains market leader with sales 70 per cent ahead of any other product, now enjoys only 60 per cent of annual sales at Christmas; not so long ago the figure was nearer 100 per cent.

The move seems to be paying off. Sales of DiSaronno are up 60 per cent year on year over the past 12 months. Meanwhile Sheridan's, a much newer brand, is "flying", he claims.

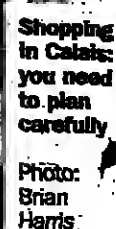
The effect on the liqueurs market as a whole, however, remains harder to quantify. Current estimates suggest total sales are growing at a much slower rate - annual sales now stand at around 32 million bottles. According to O'Donnell, growth for IDV has been at the expense of smaller rival brands.

Small wonder if competitors are now also attempting to re-position their liqueurs as a cool and flexible drink anytime and anywhere. They just can't afford not to. After all, it's hardly good for business if your product is only served three days out of 365, while for the rest of the year it sits in sticky obscurity - at the back of the drinks cabinet.



## Philippa Czernin on the joys of festive shopping in Calais

The choice of food is overwhelming. On the cheese counter you'll find there are 12 varieties of Camembert at every stage of ripeness, goat's cheese in all shapes and sizes (a pyramid of Chavroux pur chèvre costs just Fr10.95) and Brie on promotion at knock-down prices. French delicacies make good Christmas presents: look out for marrons glacés, huge, sweet chestnuts beautifully presented in wooden boxes (at Fr64.95 for just 24, they're expensive but worth it), saucissons, ranging in price from



every Sunday in December. Leaves London Victoria coach station with additional pick-up points in south-east London and Kent.

Local branches of Going Places offer a special Christmas shopping trip to Calais on Le Shuttle from only £25 for up to five people in a car or £35 Friday to Sunday.

**Other information:** Calais Tourist Office (English spoken), 12 Boulevard Clemenceau, 62100 Calais (00 33 321 96 62 40). Opening times: Mon-Sat 9am-7pm and Sun, 10am-1pm.

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When making contact with people for the first time it is advisable to meet in a public place and bring a friend or your family or trusted friend know where you would be.

We would advise respondents and advertisers when giving out personal details. This will be respected by genuine respondents.

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# homes & money

Wall Street's bubble  
could burst.....22  
Letting out your home  
to film-makers.....23



## Empty pockets

My biggest mistake

Businessman  
Howard Hodgson

**"B**ack in 1987, when I still had Hodgson Holdings, my funeral directors company, I had to get an early train from Birmingham to London. We were buying Ingels Industries, a chain of funeral homes, from House of Fraser, and I had 60 institutions waiting at the other end to see me at Capel Cure Myers.

I got to Birmingham International Station, locked the car, grabbed my briefcase and tapped my back pocket to make sure I'd got my wallet. As soon as I did it, I knew where it was - on the bedside cabinet at home. That was 25 minutes in the opposite direction and it would have meant missing the train. I didn't have enough petrol in the car to get to London and, anyway, I would over have made it in time.

It was a 6.40 train, and my first meeting was at 9am. I had no wallet, no cash, no credit cards - nothing. But I had to be there for those meetings.

so I decided I'd just have to go for it.

I ran past the guard on to the platform, ignored him shouting at me and jumped on the train. I thought 'In for a penny...' and went and sat in first class to have breakfast. When the ticket inspector came round and asked for my ticket, I said I was terribly sorry, but I didn't have any money. He said: 'What do you mean you haven't got any money - you're having breakfast!'

Fortunately, I did have a phone, so I got my branch of Lloyds Bank on the phone and, much to the amazement of everybody else sitting there eating breakfast, got them to give the ticket collector all my credit card details. Then I called someone at Capel Cure Myers, and asked him to wait downstairs with a £20 note to pay for the taxi from Euston. So I managed to get all the way there without any cash. We had our three meetings, each of them with about 20 institutions.

About three weeks later, I was buying lunch for a journalist from the *Birmingham Post* at the Savoy in London. As I was telling him how clever I was, I tapped my back pocket to illustrate the point - and I nearly died, because I'd done it again.

I wasn't going to tell the journalist that, because it would have been too embarrassing. He'd have thought I went through life either being terribly inefficient or never paying for anything. So I said I had to go to the loo, and went up to the public telephones. I called the bank and they said: 'How do we know it's you?' I said I'd called them from the train about three weeks ago, and they said: 'It's definitely you'.

I got them to call the manager of the restaurant and give him my credit card details, so he could make out the slip for me to sign. All credit to Lloyds Bank, they managed to do just that. Back in the office, I'm sure they were

wondering whether this idiot should really be running a public company.

I've had a very bad back lately, and one of the things they tell you is not to carry a big wallet full of credit cards in your back pocket, because it makes you sit unevenly, which is bad for your spine. So now I can't put my wallet in my back pocket, and I don't know where to put it. I generally put it on the floor of the restaurant, then there's hell to pay when I get back to the office without it.

It's pathetic, really. I'm worse than a four-year-old. Every time I leave the building they all ask: 'Have you got your hat on, have you got your scarf, have you got your wallet?' So I haven't got any better."

Howard Hodgson made £7m when he sold his funeral directors business in 1990, and went on to buy Ranson in 1994. He was talking to Paul Slade.

## A refund in five years. What's the snag?

You'll probably forget to claim it, says Nic Cicutti

**A**mid the seemingly identical sales promotions plastered over the shop fronts in our high streets, one offer is becoming increasingly common: "Buy now and get all your money back in five years." Does this sound interesting?

It does to growing numbers of people. After all, who could turn down the offer of a total cash refund, where you also get to keep the item you bought only a few years earlier? Deals such as this one are now being snapped up by many thousands of new customers each year.

Despite their success, the Office of Fair Trading, a competition watchdog, this week warned customers to think carefully before entering into such an agreement.

A spokesman said: "If these schemes catch on, in five years' time there will be either a lot of happy or disappointed customers. Unfortunately, until the time is up we will not know which one."

The offer is beguilingly simple. You buy an item from a shop and some time later you receive a "cheque" - an IOU in reality - through the post for the same amount from the store. The cheque has a tear-off slip, which you complete and send to a finance company, registering for your money-back deal.

In theory, in five years' time you cash your IOU by sending it to the finance house, which will repay your original money after checking that you are on the register.

The deals are most often arranged through Intervest Capital, a US firm with offices in Grays, Essex.

Peter Kirwan is managing director of the Sofa Company, a firm with about 50



outlets around the country. He says: "We have been offering cashbacks for about 18 months to two years and arrange about 60 deals a week."

"We tended to offer interest-free credit. That costs us to arrange but the problem was that not everyone wants it, especially someone who prefers to pay in cash. Then cashbacks became available."

Sofa Company sends a voucher to customers shortly after a sale takes place. They then have 14 days to send on the completed form to Intervest. After the five years are

up, there is a 30-day time limit on claims.

Mr Kirwan admits the system is based on the likelihood that few people will take all the right steps needed to claim successfully.

"There may only be about 60 per cent of people who get their money back in five years," he says. "We believe that Intervest are large enough to meet any liabilities in a few years time. If it does go wrong, that does not mean people can come back to us. We did not plan it that way. We have paid someone to take care of it."

Intervest operates from

offices formerly used by another firm, Warranty Management, which once acted as its marketing agent.

Warranty Management, whose staff also now work for Intervest, once acted on behalf of a Belgian company, Homefield Insurance, which is no longer believed to be operating in the UK.

Intervest claims to have assets of more than \$500m and enough additional insurance to pick up the slack in the event of a rash of claims.

Adrian Roman, practice manager for Caplans, a firm of solicitors based in Harrow which has acted for Intervest since September, says: "The system is based on the fact that there will be a certain slippage between people eligible for the refund and those that apply for it. In effect, this is a financial memory test. If you remember to claim, you will have passed the test."

The OFT accepts that it is not possible to determine either way whether customers will get their money back in five years' time. It warns prospective buyers to:

• Ask to see a sample cheque, with all the terms on the back. Don't buy unless you read all the terms.

• Think of a way to remind yourself to claim in five years' time, within all the specified limits.

• Send all your correspondence by recorded delivery.

• Ask yourself: is the firm based in this country? Will you be able to claim if it is no longer based here? If your money is not refunded, would you still feel you had value from the product?

If you are not sure of the answers, it may be sensible to play safe and ignore the promotional blandishments.

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shares, are up 9 per cent and 14 per cent respectively in the year to the beginning of December, according to *Micropal*.

Over five years they are up 33 per cent and 41 per cent. Abtrust Property Share unit trust, which holds no direct property, is up 22 per cent over one year and 73 per cent over five years, *Micropal* shows.

Chris Turner, manager of TR Property, says, "Direct assets are holding the trust back at the moment as shares are racing ahead of property values. Shares normally predict the property market by six to 15 months, so values should be rising next year."

Andrew Thomson, who manages Barclays Unicorn Property Trust, points out its property is less volatile in the short term than equities. "It took two to three years to knock capital values in the recession, because the valuation process takes time." By the same token a sustained rise in capital values will not

offices and out-of-town shopping are the two areas the trust has picked to outperform.

As well as owning shares in companies heavily exposed to these areas, the trust uses direct investment to go overweight. It has two out-of-town retail warehouses in its portfolio.

Abtrust Property Share favours office property in South-east England. Manager William Hemmings says: "They suffered the hardest in recession and, because development has been low for a few years, there is a lack of supply."

Yields on property trusts vary according to underlying assets. Abtrust at 2.3 per cent points out it is not a yield fund. Norwich and Barclays, because of high direct holdings, yield more than equity funds at 5.75 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively after annual charges.

Mr Thomson says Barclays' yield should be about 6 per cent, when the trust is fully income-producing.

No Surrender

Choose change

Find out why pension plans are not all the same.



# No surrender: try a sale instead

You can sell your endowment policy second-hand. But there are complications, says Neil Baker

Savers who no longer need their with-profits endowments or cannot afford the payments are often disappointed when they discover that the cash-in value of the policy is much less than they expected.

It is sometimes possible to get more from the policy by selling it in a growing second-hand market instead of surrendering it to the company it was bought from. But after a court ruling last week, anyone considering such a move needs to shop around much more carefully.

The ruling, pushed through by the Office of Fair Trading, removes the 3 per cent ceiling on commissions currently paid to advisers who sell the policies on their clients' behalf.

The OFT argues that such a maximum commission restricts competition and works against a client's best interests. However, advisers argue that the effect of the OFT's move will be to force prices up, not down.

David Beale, a partner in Beale Dobie, a leading firm of second-hand endowment buyers and sellers, says: "Free competition among intermediaries usually leads to increased rather than reduced commission levels, so customers will ultimately lose out."

With-profits endowment policies are usually used to help pay off a mortgage. But only a third of policies taken out actually reach maturity. Some 30 per cent are cancelled in the first three years and 40 per cent are surrendered or sold.

If a policy is surrendered, the amount the holder gets back from the life company varies. But endowment policies are structured so that much of the value of the policy does not come until the last few years before it matures. This is partly because such policies attract heavy initial charges. Also a large part of a policy's final value is made up of a terminal bonus, paid only at the end of its life.

According to the Association of British Insurers, endowments worth £5.5bn are surrendered each year. Not all of these are with-profits policies – the sort that are traded second-hand – although an estimated £700m worth might be.

Peter Thorne, of financial advisers Parker Jerome, says the extra amount raised depends on the individual policy but it could be around 15 to 20 per cent above the surrender value. Because they already have a guaranteed minimum value and initial charges have been paid off, second-hand policies are seen as a good buy.

Companies such as Beale Dobie, SEC Group and Absolute Assigned Policies organise a market, matching people who want to sell policies with investors who want to buy.

In the past, these market-making companies have agreed among themselves that they would not pay more than 3 per cent to financial advisers

who bring in clients. But the OFT believes that a maximum commission would actually operate as a fixed standard. Its court action has led to market-makers giving an undertaking not to set commission levels in future.

David Beale says: "Our view is that 3 per cent is very reasonable but anything above that level ought to be questioned by the policyholder."

Policyholders aiming to sell their endowments must now ask their adviser what commission they are getting and shop around for advice if it seems too high.

Max Rosen, managing director of SEC, another endowment buyer and seller, says a further option is to bypass financial advisers and go to market-makers directly. About 50 per cent of policyholders do this at present. Those tempted to follow this route should remember that market-makers are not able to give advice.

Selling a policy in the traded

endowments market might not always be the best option. If you need money quickly or if you cannot afford to keep up payments, there are other alternatives.

• Take out a loan against the policy. Even if you do not pay the loan off, the policy's final value, after all charges have been paid off, might be more than the current surrender value.

• Make the policy "paid up". This means you stop paying premiums. The date of the payout stays the same and you will receive less.

• If you still need a cash lump sum, surrender or sale are not the only options. Companies such as Foster & Cranfield regularly auction policies.

Association of Policy Market Makers: 0171 729 8854  
Foster & Cranfield: 0171 608 1941  
For an independent financial adviser near you, call IFA Promotions: 0177 971 1177.



No need to hand over your valuable endowment policy to the insurance company Photograph: Ronald Grant



## loose change

Allenbridge, the independent financial advice firm, is offering free copies of its new Peptalk guide, with details of best-performing Peps and how to choose between them. Call 0500-551000.

Midland Bank is offering new fixed-rate mortgages, including a two-year offer of 5.99 per cent, with booking fees and completion refunded on completion. Details from all branches.

Scottish Provident is launching two investment funds, Secure 100 and Secure 100 Maximiser, offering capital growth linked either to the FTSE-100 stock market index or actively managed by its fund manager, Profitic. Minimum investment is £10,000. Details from inde-

pendent financial advisers. Call 0117 971 1177.

Leeds & Holbeck is offering a 7.5 per cent gross top rate on deposits over £50,000 in its Albion Boous postal account, including a guaranteed bonus of 1.5 per cent if no withdrawals are made before 30 April 1998. Call 0113 225 7777.

Canada Life is adding free accidental HIV cover to its critical illness and private health insurance products sold to members of the emergency services, dentists, doctors, prison officers, and medical consultants. Details from 01701 651122.

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Greenwich BS	0181 8588212	3.49% for 2 years	95	£250	1st 5 yrs: discount reclaimed		
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	5.24% to 1/1/02	95	—	1st 7 yrs: 5% of sum repaid		
<b>PERSONAL LOANS</b>							
Telephone	APR %	Max LTV	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)	With insurance	Without insurance		
<b>Unsecured</b>							
Northern Rock BS	0345 421421	12.9H	£12.66	£102.39	£101.45		
Royal B of Scotland	0800 121125	14.0	£114.78	£102.49	£101.45		
Nationwide BS	0800 591500	14.9	£113.15	£102.49	£101.45		
<b>Secured (second charge)</b>							
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	7.5	Neg	£3K - £15K	6 mths to 25 years		
Royal B of Scotland	0151 523 7023	8.7	70%	£2.5K-£100K	3 years to retirement		
Barclays Bank	0800 000929	9.3/9.6	80%	£10K-£75K	5 to 25 years		
<b>OVERDRAFTS</b>							
Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	Unauthorised % pm	APR	Int. free period		
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76	9.5	21.8	29.5	
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	2.20	29.8	
Bank of Scotland	0800 805805	Direct Cheque	—	11.0	—	26.5	
<b>CREDIT CARDS</b>							
Telephone	Card Type	Min Income	Rate % pm	APR %	Annual Fee	Int. free period	
<b>Standard</b>							
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	—	0.64H	7.90H	nil	0 days
Capital One Bank	0800 669000	Visa	—	0.797H	9.90H	nil	54 days
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	Mastercard/Visa	—	0.9167	11.50	nil	0 days
<b>Gold cards</b>							
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.50	10.50	£120	46 days
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	£20,000	0.94H	11.90H	nil	56 days
Royal B of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05H	14.50H	£35	46 days

APR: Annualised percentage rate. B+C: Buildings and Contents insurance. LTV: Loan to value. ASU: Accident, sickness and unemployment. F: Available to co-operators under insurance policyholders aged over 22 years. H: Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged. N: Introductory rate for a limited period.

All rates subject to change without notice.

Source: MONEYPACTS 01602 500577 12 December 1996

APR Annualised percentage rate. B+C Buildings and Contents insurance LTV Loan to value. ASU Accident, sickness and unemployment. E Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 25 years. H - Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged. N Introductory rate for a limited period.

All rates subject to change without notice.

Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677

12 December 1996

## Best savings rates

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
<b>Portman BS</b>						
Co-Depository Bank	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.50	Year
Direct Line	0345 252000	Postfinder	Instant	£5,000	4.75	Month
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£10,000	5.50	Year
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.75	Year
<b>Teachers' BS</b>						
Scarborough BS	01202 887171	Bolton	Postal	£500	4.80	1/2 Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 590578	Instant by Post	Postal	£5,000	5.70	Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901108	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£10,000	6.00	Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901108	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.05	Year
<b>Cheltenham &amp; Gloucester</b>						
First National BS	0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day P	£100	5.50	Year
Laplagd Joseph & Sons	01232 314050	High Yield	30 day	£25,000	6.45	Year
Leeds & Holbeck BS	0171 288 2323	40 Day Notice	40 day	£10,000	6.22	Year
Leeds & Holbeck BS	0113 225 7777	Postal Bonus	30/4/98P	£18,000	7.00	Maturity
<b>Kleinwort Benson</b>						
Hatfield BS	01202 502404	HCA	Instant	£2,500	5.20	Month
Chelms BS	01422 335333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.00	Quarter
Schroders	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.35	Year
Schroders	0171 382 3301	Special	Instant	£10,000	5.15	Monthly/Year
<b>Yorkshire</b>						
Westwood BS	0800 378836	Fixed Rate Bond	31/3/98	£5,000	6.60F	Maturity
Coverly BS	0800 222220	Fixed Rate Bond	2 Year	£1,000	6.75F	Year
Sun Banking Corp	0345 665522	Fixed Rate Bond	30/11/99	£1,000	7.30F	Year
Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Guaranteed Investment	5 Year	£1,000	7.50F	Year
<b>Sun Banking Corp</b>						
West West Bank	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£8,575	7.50F	Year
Birmingham Midlands West Birmingham BS	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F	Year
Birmingham Midlands West Birmingham BS	0645 720721	Inflation Beater	5 years	£1,000	7.00	Year
Birmingham Midlands West Birmingham BS	0990 143668	Inflation Beater	5 years	£250	7.00	Year
<b>Sun Banking Corporation</b>						
West West Bank	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.50F	Year
National Counties BS	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F	Year
West Birmingham BS	01372 747771	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.50	Year
West Birmingham BS	0990 143668	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£250	7.00	Year
<b>Investment Accounts</b>						
			1 month	£20	4.75	Year
				£500	5.25	Year
				£25,000	5.50	Year
			3 months	£25,000	6.00	Month
				£25,000	6.25	Month
			5 years	£200	6.65F	Maturity
			12 months	£1,000	6.80F	Year
				£20,000	6.25F	Year
				£500	7.00F	Month
			5 year	£100	5.35F	Maturity
			5 year	£100	2.50+ipi	Maturity
			5 year	£25	6.75F	Maturity
<b>Income Bonds</b>						
					</	

P post only. F fixed rate. A All withdrawals subject to 30 day loss of interest. All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.

Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677, 12 December 1996

## fear of finance



The Office of Fair Trading is generally reckoned to be a staunch defender of consumers' interests. It has been responsible for far-reaching reforms of how financial products are sold, including a requirement for companies to disclose the charges they impose on their policies.

Such reforms, plus the hard-hitting reports produced on a range of issues, from warranties on electrical goods to with-profit endowments, help keep companies on their toes.

At the same time, some of its officials are capable of the most crass errors of judgement. Elsewhere in this section, Neil Baker describes how the OFT has acted to scrap a maximum commission agreement on the sale of second-hand endowment policies.

Until now, any adviser acting on behalf of a client wanting to buy or sell such a policy could not charge more than 3 per cent commission. The OFT has now stepped in, arguing that such a policy is uncompetitive. By banning the deal, it hopes advisers will be prepared to offer cheaper deals.

That is the theory. What is the practice? Well, in the early 1990s, the life and pensions industry operated a similar maximum commission agreement. For all its imperfections, the system worked reasonably well - until it was scrapped on the grounds that it prevented people getting an even better deal.

So what has happened to commissions since then? The average rate paid to advisers has risen in the past five years by up to 50 per cent, well ahead of inflation.

Who was responsible for scrapping the old commissions agreement? The OFT. How do we know about what has happened to commissions? Because, by a supreme irony, the OFT's very success in forcing companies to disclose how much they pay their advisers also demonstrates the extent of its failure to control the amount.

Who was it that pointed out how history has a tendency to repeat itself, as tragedy, then as farce?

Journalists are often seen as cynical creatures. I wonder why? This week I received a letter from Cigna, the insurance firm.

"Dear Nic," it intoned. "Christmas is a time of great enjoyment, with houses full of fun and laughter, especially if you have young children about. However, it is a sad but unavoidable fact that accidents still happen in the festive season..."

The letter goes on to tell me about Cigna's policies which, for £5 a month, will pay up to £50,000 for accidents, including the loss of a child's sight.

As an exercise in cynicism, nothing beats this little missive. To think that we chop down trees for this.

Nic Cicutti

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£10,000+	6.25	5.00	6.00	4.75

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## Wall Street's bubble could burst soon

Jonathan Davis

As we approach the last gasp of the great bull market of the past two years (the Dow Jones index is up by two thirds in that time), you would have to be very foolish to ignore the voices that are warning investors to beware of the fallout from the inevitable puncturing of Wall Street's bubble when it comes.

The most important of these voices, of course, is that of Alan Greenspan, who as chairman of the Federal Reserve, the American central bank, has more power than anyone to change the directions of markets. Nine days ago, he sent markets the world over into a tizzy with some elliptical but carefully crafted warnings about the risks to economic welfare posed by "irrational exuberance" among investors.

Since then, those who are paid to watch the Fed have been busy attempting to read deeper meaning into the chairman's words. Everyone knows he has been keeping a close watch in recent months on Wall Street for signs of excess. The surge of public and speculative money that has poured into US shares in the last two years must at some point run the risk of creating a dangerously inflated asset "bubble".

The immediate question among analysts has been whether the Federal Reserve is preparing to try and puncture the boom with a pre-emptive interest rate rise. Despite the initial panicky response, the reassuring view on Wall Street earlier this week was that no rate rises are imminent and that the bull market case therefore remains just about intact.

But Mr Greenspan's intervention - whether it was a warning shot or a more serious threat to try and stop Wall Street in its tracks - has brought other concerns out into the open.

Whether it is seasoned investors such as Sir James Goldsmith, or respected market pundits such as Barton Biggs of Morgan Stanley and Henry Kaufman, late of Salomon, the heaviest hitters are nearly all on the side of those who are urging investors not to tempt fate by being sucked into Wall Street's all too "exuberant" rise.

In this column two weeks



Jonathan Davis

ago, I quoted the view of Peter Bernstein, another respected investment adviser, that while Wall Street might not be overvalued on conventional criteria, the risks of investing had risen sharply.

And only this week, Lord Renshaw, the former editor of the *Times*, who has excellent contacts in Washington and the financial world, repeated his warning that a Wall Street crash is inevitable.

He made the point that if the dividend yield on the US stock market (now at a record low of just over 2 per cent) merely reverted to its long-term average (around 4.5 per cent), it would imply a fall in the Dow Jones index of no less than 70 per cent. His calculations suggest Wall Street is already discounting seven more years of 10 per cent growth in company earnings - despite the fact that the rate of profit growth is already very high by historical standards.

I have been impressed by the analysis done by Albert Edwards, market strategist at Kleinwort Benson, who has shown clearly (as my chart shows) that the improvement in companies' return on equity in the US is driven mainly by companies substituting debt for equity, not by any underlying improvement in the return on total capital employed.

This increase in gearing does raise return on equity - and therefore reported profits - but it also means (a) that investors are taking on greater risk than might at first appear, and (b) that in the same geared way, company earnings will fall much faster too when the next downturn comes.

The point is not that all these clever and experienced people might be wrong. Far from it, markets frequently make monkeys out of the most intelligent and well informed individuals. Nor is there any inconsistency in saying markets are basically overvalued but may still rise further. Markets always do things like this, and timing the turn is the hardest thing in the world.

In fact, it is perfectly possible to justify the current valuation on Wall Street. What matters to prudent investors is that they are aware of the risks they take on if they choose to ignore the warning voices.

When the chairman of the Fed starts asking warning noises it pays to sit up and take notice. Not for nothing is the adage "Don't Fight the Fed" one of the oldest in Wall Street's lexicon.

In this column two weeks

In this column two weeks

In this column two weeks

In this column two weeks

In this column two weeks

In this column two weeks

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In this column two weeks



By Penny Jackson

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# Keep the family in it

Roger Bell compares the Citroën Synergie with the Nissan Terrano

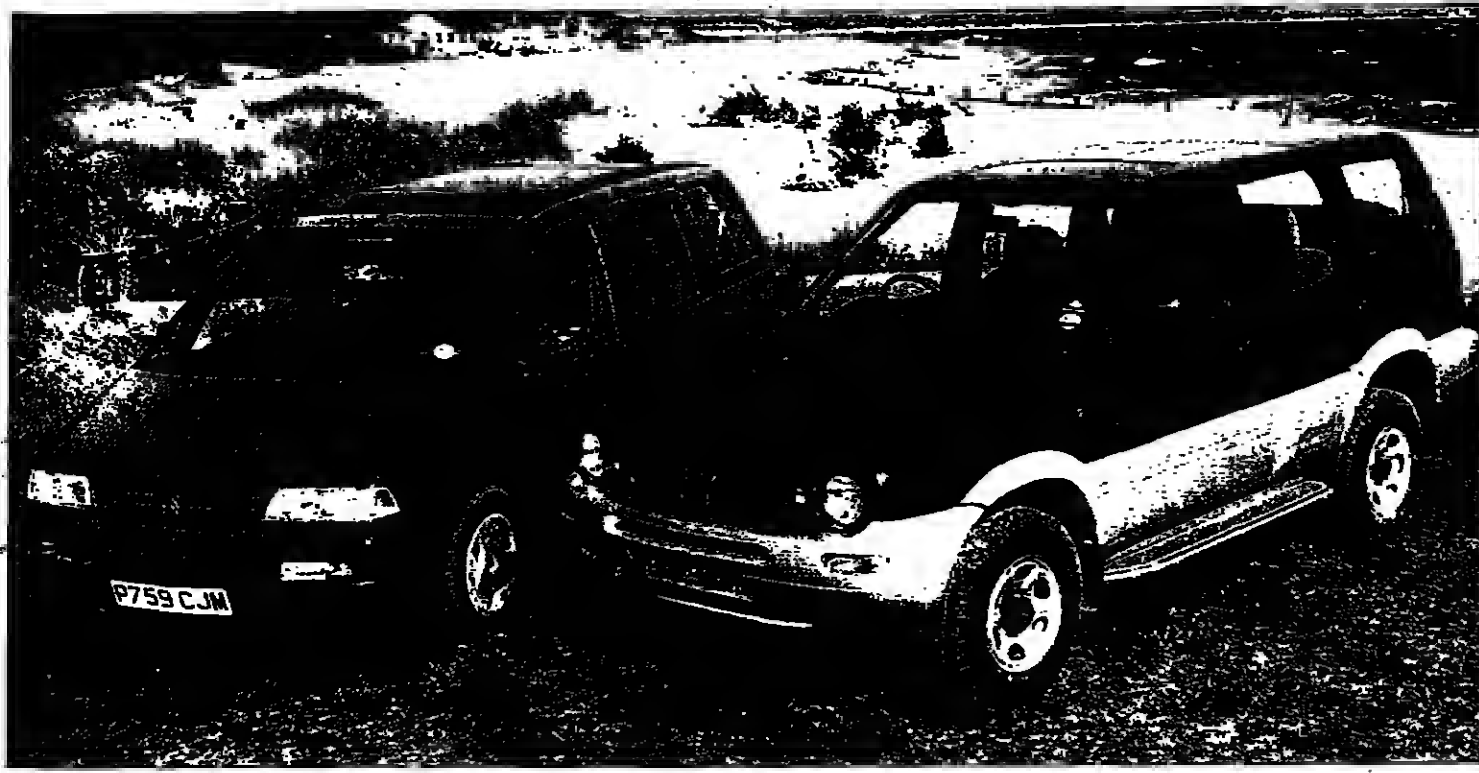
Britain's love affair with "lifestyle" off-landers, most of which crunch nothing more demanding than manured gravel, seems to have peaked. After a decade of dramatic boom (sales rose from under 13,000 in 1986 to over 80,000 last year) 4WD registrations have levelled off. By the end of the year, they may even be in decline.

Not so MPVs. Multi-purpose vehicles – boring vans with windows to cynics, revolutionary family holdalls to the converted – are gnawing into the market across a broad front. Just over 7,000 were registered in Britain five years ago when the pioneering Renault Espace led the field. The forecast this year is for nearer 30,000, with the lion's share going to the excellent Ford Galaxy and its VW Sharan and Seat Alhambra clones. By the turn of the century, it's estimated that 600,000 MPVs a year will have been sold in Europe.

Traditional estate cars have not been the invading MPVs' only victims. Off-landers – perhaps better described as all-purpose all-landers – are among their conquests, too. And why not? Size for size, these two specialised breeds have much in common.

The 4x4 Nissan Terrano (the Ford Maverick's twin) and the Citroën Synergie (made alongside the joint-venture Fiat Ulysse and Peugeot 806) may be from different market sectors but they're competitive on price, power and seven-seater accommodation. While the big, hatch, all-drive Terrano can clearly out-scramble the front-drive Synergie, it is on suburban tarmac that the two usually compete.

Although similar in size, the Synergie, unencumbered by the weight of a 10-speed, 4x4 transmission system, is considerably lighter – to the benefit of performance and, more significantly, economy. It's also easier to drive, not least because the gearlever, which protrudes from a classy dash, feels less agricultural than the Nissan's. Much as I like the effortless mid-range punch of the



MPVs and off-landers: size for size, these two specialised breeds have much in common

Photograph: Roger Bell

torquey Terrano's civilised 2.7 litre turbo-diesel, the 2.0-litre petrol engine of the test Citroën is smoother, quieter and niftier through the gears. Parity in performance (but not in economy) is achieved only when the Terrano's thirsty 2.4-litre petrol engine is pitched against the Citroën's frugal 1.9 turbo-diesel.

Drive with restraint, the Terrano behaves with reasonable decorum. Pushed beyond its natural ambling gait, though, it feels cumbersome. Steering is sluggish and vague, cornering grip modest. Like most off-landers, the Terrano lacks the stance, agility and tenacity of a low-slung saloon. It's the price you pay for massive boulder-straddling ground clearance and fairly crude suspension designed more for acute articulation than ride comfort. Even on decent roads, the Nissan bobs

and jerks harshly, albeit without kettledrum thumping from the big (and very expensive) tyres. The cabin is well isolated from road noise by a separate rugged chassis.

From the driver's seat, the Citroën Synergie looks, feels and behaves much more like a normal saloon. Although the roofline is high the centre of gravity is quite low. Whereas the Terrano perches on the road, as if on stilts, the Synergie, riding on smaller wheels and more sophisticated car-like suspension, squats on it. Handling and cornering benefit from this, though the ride is disappointingly agitated.

You sit a couple of inches taller in the Terrano, all the better for sight-seeing and hazard spotting. However, the versatile Synergie has the more imposing cabin and dash. Its individ-

ual seats – rows two and three served by easy-sliding doors – can be juggled around or discarded altogether. In the Terrano, only the uncomfortable rear bench can be removed. With all the seats in place, luggage space is pretty meagre in both cars.

If you really need mud-pugging, bank-climbing, stream-foraging, precipice-defying transport, the Terrano's your car. Recent major improvements have elevated this rather gawky-looking vehicle from wimp to warrior, built like a tank and well endowed (the turbo-diesel is all muscle). As a road-going people carrier for the urban jungle, though, it is over-specified and under-achieving. The Synergie – a good MPV but not the best – makes a better job of transporting seven adults (if not their luggage) speedily, economically and comfortably.

**Citroën Synergie:** Price: £16,200 to £23,090 according to specification. Engine: 1.9-litre, 92bhp turbo-diesel or 2.0-litre 123bhp petrol. Transmission: five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive. Performance: top speed 99mph; 0-60mph in 13.9 seconds, 31.7mpg urban cycle (diesel); 110mph, 0-60mph in 12.1 seconds, 23.9mpg urban cycle (petrol).

**Nissan Terrano:** Price: £16,600 to £23,100 according to specification. Engine: 2.7-litre, 125bhp turbo-diesel or 2.4-litre, 118bhp petrol. Transmission: five-speed manual gearbox, part-time four-wheel drive with selectable low-ratio, auto-locking front hubs. Performance: top speed 96mph, 0-60mph in 16.2 seconds, 22.6mpg urban cycle (diesel); 99mph, 0-60mph in 14.3 seconds, 17.9mpg urban cycle (petrol).



Gavin Green

Buttons on radios are invariably tiny, suitable only for people who have fingers shaped like ET

Of the innumerable design solecisms to be found on cars, none is more repulsive to the eye and more awkward to the hand than the typical radio. And that's before we talk about its sound quality. (In general, car radios – at least those fitted as standard by most manufacturers – sound appalling. This is no wonder. I have it on good authority that one major manufacturer buys its standard-specification radio/cassette players for only £20 – well under a tenth of what the same manufacturer charges for replacement units.)

Their poor sound quality is, arguably, excusable – after all, how many of us notice that they're so bad? But their shoddy appearance and usability are certainly not. In the main, they are just plastic-faced boxes fitted willy-nilly to some convenient (for the manufacturer, not for the user) position on the dash. Their buttons are invariably tiny, suitable only for people who have fingers shaped like ET. And what's more, the buttons have graphics which are incomprehensible to most punters. As an upshot, I'll wager that most hiccups on car radios are over-pushed, twisted or pulled.

In the old days, car radios tended to have two big round knobs – one for on/off and volume, the other for channel selection. Push buttons helped to locate your pre-programmed channels. This design worked well and looked good. It should never have changed. But it did. We have been confused ever since.

At long last there are signs of improvement. The new Ford Ka has a radio designed to integrate into the dash, rather than merely have a rectangular hole into which some radio manufacturer can insert its latest multi-channel, multi-watt eyecore. The Ka has big knobs and buttons, just like old-fashioned radios, designed to be pushed by fingers not pins. I mastered it in minutes, rather than remaining baffled by it for months.

Other manufacturers are now also making an effort. Most praiseworthy is the new Renault Espace, on sale in the UK next spring. It has a radio visible at all. This clearly deters the hooligan who, judging by the number of car radios stolen, seems to be the only person who understands modern car radios.

In the Espace, the radio's electronics are all hidden under the bonnet. Controls are mounted on satellites either side of the steering wheel. Renault pioneered satellite controls, a major and yet unused contribution to road safety, now copied by the likes of BMW and Jaguar (on its new XK8 sports car) among many other makers. They allow channels to be changed and the volume to be altered without taking your eye off the road and groping around at the bottom of the dash for those wretched little buttons. The Espace, though, now takes the concept a stage further.

By removing the radio head unit from the dash, Renault has also improved the cabin design. After all, what better way of tidying up the interior than by getting rid of its ugliest feature?

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